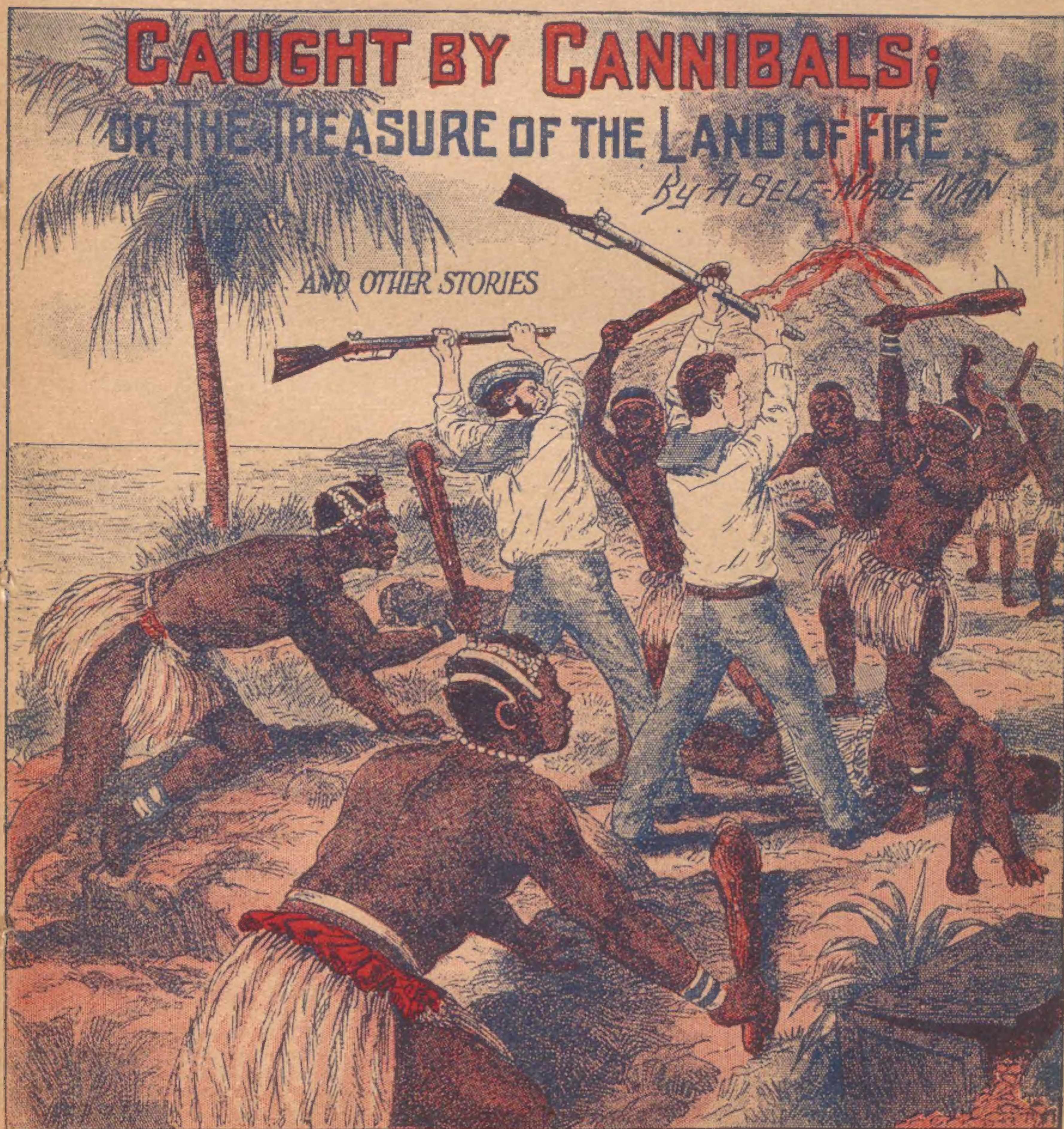


FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY. WEEKLY.



As the savages, in spite of the loss they had sustained, rushed in and attacked the castaways at close quarters, Jack and Bill were obliged to use their weapons as clubs in a desperate effort to hold the natives back.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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CAUGHT BY CANNIBALS

OR, THE TREASURE OF THE LAND OF FIRE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Six Shipwrecked Sailors

"I don't like the looks nor the actions of those fellows, Bill," said Jack Stedfast, jerking his thumb over his left shoulder in the direction of half a dozen cadaverous and villainous looking men who were talking together in whispers in the waist of the American brig Octopus.

The speaker was a stalwart young foremast hand, while the person he addressed was a bearded old shellback named Bill Bowling. The two were leaning over the starboard bulwark of the vessel gazing out over the vast watery expanse of the South Atlantic Ocean which was rapidly growing indistinct in the dusk of the evening. The Octopus, Jared Snow, master, was a stanch, weather-beaten craft bound from New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn. At the present time she was close to the Strait of Magellan, a narrow and tortuous passage which cut off the archipelago of Terra del Fuego (Land of Fire) from the extreme southern point of the South American continent. The men to whom Jack Stedfast referred had been rescued that afternoon from a ship's longboat. They told a harrowing yarn of shipwreck and privation that seemed to be confirmed by their gaunt and hungry-looking countenances and the battered condition of the boat, and yet they were remarkably spry for men who had passed through the fearful experience they laid claim to.

"What's worryin' you, shipmate?" asked the briny old salt in reply to the boy's remark. "You can't expect chaps who've been through what they have to look like ordinary men. As for their actions what fault have you to find with 'em?"

"I can't exactly express my sentiments in words, Bill, but I suspect they're not just what they seem to be," replied Jack in a meaning tone.

"What else can they be but six shipwrecked sailors? That's what they say they are, and they look it."

"I know they say so, and I'll allow they look it, but it seems to me they never could have gone through what they said they have and still be able to get around in the lively way they're able to."

The middle-aged sailor puffed away at his pipe and looked thoughtful. Jack had put thoughts in his head that hadn't occurred to him before. If any one ought to know the effects produced on the human frame by exposure and starvation in an

open boat for a lengthened period of time that person was Bill Bowling, for he had been through the experience himself. What his young companion and shipmate said set him thinking. His thoughts flew back to the time when he had been picked up at sea, the sole survivor of eight men, whom a foundering ship had compelled to trust themselves to the uncertain chance of a small boat unprovided with food or water, or even a bit of sail to supplement the two pair of oars, and that awful experience had never been effaced from his recollection. The six shipwrecked mariners they had befriended that afternoon had told a similar pathetic experience, and yet none of them had collapsed under the strain, and after stowing a square meal under their waistbands had seemed almost chipper as young colts. Certainly it looked as if they were blessed with most extraordinary vitality.

"I dunno but you are right, Jack," replied the able seaman slowly. "That there chap who spun the yarn to the skipper said a whole lot more'n the truth I reckon."

"I'll bet he did. Tried to play on our sympathies. I don't believe they were out in that boat as long as they said they were, or if they were they had a supply of food most of the time."

"Suppose they did draw on their imaginations some, that ain't no reason why we should hold it ag'in 'em. It's a mighty tough thing to be floatin' around the ocean in a ship's boat, even if you ain't exactly down to hard pan. They must have finished up all their grub anyway, for they didn't have none left when we rescued 'em. If we hadn't sighted 'em they'd have been in a sight worse fix."

"I'm not finding any fault with their story, even if I don't believe more than half of it. What I'm suspicious of is their actions since they came aboard," said Jack.

"What's the matter with their actions?"

"Don't you see how they stick closer than wax, always putting their heads together as if they were conniving about something or another they didn't want anybody else to find out?"

"That ain't nothin', seein' that they're strangers aboard. It's kind of natural for them to hobnob till they git acquainted with us," replied the old sailor.

"That may be, too, but still there's something about them that I don't like. The feeling is in

my head that all isn't right, and I can't get away from it," answered Jack in a dogged kind of way.

"When you've had more experience with sailors, shipmate, you'll look at things differently," nodded Bill, knocking the ashes out of his pipe into the water and putting it in his pocket. "This here is uncommonly fine weather for this latitude."

"I'll have to take your word for it as I never was down in this locality before," said Jack, after taking a furtive look at the group of rescued sailors who were still talking in low tones around the mainmast.

"It's generally cold at all seasons, but the natives of them islands to the north of the cape go around 'most naked jest the same," said Bowling.

"How do they stand it?"

"How does anybody stand what he's used to?"

"As you've been around the Horn several times I suppose you've seen many of the natives."

"I've seen a good many of them."

"What do they look like?"

"They're short, ugly and beardless, though they have a lot of hair on their bodies of a rusty color."

"I've heard they were not friendly to strangers; that they practiced strange superstitious rites, and that in many of the islands the inhabitants were cannibals."

"I reckon you heard right. I know of a case where a vessel was lost on one of the smaller islands, and all hands got safe ashore. They started to explore the place and were captured by the natives. Will you believe it every mother's son of them but one, who escaped to tell the story, was killed and eaten."

"That was pretty tough. Those savages were as bad as the old time Fiji Islanders and other South Sea cannibals."

"The inhabitants of the big island, called King Charles's South Land, are not so bad as the rest, though I've heard they eat the old women of their tribe when they haven't anythin' else to chew on."

"If they do that I should think a stranger wouldn't stand much show when they were real hungry."

"I ain't heard that they ever ate any white men, though that ain't sayin' they haven't done so. I reckon I wouldn't trust 'em, though I'm that tough and salty that I don't think I'd agree with 'em if they tried to eat me."

"I'm afraid you wouldn't be in any shape to get much satisfaction out of the fact," laughed Jack.

"That's right, shipmate. When a chap's dead he loses all interest in this here world."

At that moment four bells were sounded on the brig's bell forward, and the members of the crew constituting the first watch, from eight to midnight, came tumbling on deck to relieve Jack, Bill and the other two members of the second dog watch who had gone on duty at six o'clock. The day had been an unusually pleasant one for that part of the world, and a good breeze had kept all sail bellied out as stiff as drum heads.

The wind had dropped at sundown to a light slant, but the captain expected it would freshen up again before midnight. Indeed, from the presence of many clouds in the sky, which made the night somewhat dark, plenty of wind seemed certain before the morning. The four members of the crew now off duty went below to their bunks in the

forecastle to turn in, for they would have to turn out at midnight.

The brig was a bit shorthanded, and for that reason the skipper welcomed the coming of the six shipwrecked sailors. He intended to divide them among the two watches on the morrow, judging that a square night's rest, with proper food, would put them in shape for the work that lay ahead when the vessel rounded the Horn.

Although the brig's forecabin was a stuffy sort of bedroom, lined as it was with bunks for the accommodation of a dozen seamen, low ceiled and lighted with a dull-burning slush lamp, still the sailors of the Octopus never had any trouble in falling asleep almost the moment their heads touched their pillows.

Jack Stedfast, though new to the sea, for this was his first voyage, had long since got accustomed to the place, and dropped off into slumber as readily as his more seasoned associates.

The present night proved an exception to the rule with him.

Instead of going asleep like the others he never felt more wideawake in his life. He tried hard enough to court repose, but the effort was a failure. His wakefulness might have been due to the absence of the customary sounds of wind and wave, and the lack of the rolling and heaving movement of the brig, for the vessel rode along on almost an even keel, and as noiselessly as a spectral craft. More likely it was the activity of his brain that kept him awake.

In spite of efforts to the contrary his thoughts would persist in returning to the six shipwrecked sailors on deck, whom he regarded with a good deal of suspicion, though just why he couldn't satisfactorily explain even to himself.

As he had told Bill Bowling, he didn't like their looks in the first place, and he didn't fancy their actions either.

He kept wondering what they were doing on deck when they were at liberty to turn in below for a full night's rest. After having been, as they alleged, more than a week in an open boat, with nothing to eat but a few birds they had knocked down with their oars, and nothing to drink but the rain water that fell into the boat on two or three occasions, and which, they said, they had lapped up, like animals, with their tongues, it looked decidedly odd to him why they hadn't taken to their bunks directly after supper.

He pictured them to himself as still engaged in their endless conversation, which they took care that nobody else overheard around the mainmast in the darkness, and he wondered why the chief mate didn't insist on them leaving the deck for their own good.

After a time, however, his thoughts took a different turn, and went back to the humble home he had left for the roving life of a common sailor.

It wasn't because romances of the sea, of which he had read a lot in the magazines, had shaped his present course. Indeed, he had never been infatuated with a life on the bounding wave.

It was simply in obedience to the doctor's suggestion he had shipped for a trip to San Francisco and back on the Octopus in the hope that it would make a new boy of him. His hopes had already borne fruit, for he never felt better, nor looked more healthy and rugged, in his life than

he did now. After graduating from the village high school he had taken up with civil engineering as his life work, but already weakened by a steady course of study he couldn't stand the strain. His eyes went back on him and a siege of brain fever followed. When he recovered the doctor said the best thing he could do would be to take a long ocean trip, and a sailing vessel was about the only thing that would fill the bill.

As he couldn't afford to go as a passenger he decided to work his way as a sailor, for he had the nerve to attempt anything that promised to be of physical advantage to him.

So he left his mother and a younger sister, who had a small annuity to live on, in their own little cottage in his native village, came to New York and shipped.

Thus we find him aboard the brig, about half way to San Francisco, already in his hard life, and fairly well broken into the duties of his new occupation, which he had taken to with the cheerfulness born of necessity. As he lay in his bunk he went over again all he had passed through since leaving his home, and he really wondered how he had come through the early stages of his tough experience so well for a landsman. He was rather proud of his success, though he had no intention of repeating the performance after he got back to New York.

Civil engineering had more charms for him, since it promised good financial returns, and he considered he was cut out by taste and education for something far superior to the life of a sailor, even with promotion to the cabin in the perspective. In the midst of his reflections his thoughts suddenly veered around to the six rescued sailors again, and finding that sleep appeared to be out of the question he decided to go on deck and see what they were doing.

CHAPTER II.—The Capture of the Brig.

The night was jet black, and there were hardly any sounds in the air when Jack crawled up the fore-castle ladder in his stocking feet. Above him hung the big foresail, and above that the fore-topsail, and still higher the foretopgallant sail just drawing to the night breeze, but he could only dimly make out the lower folds of the bigger one.

Dropping softly to the deck he crawled forward to the mainmast, with similar sails rising and lost in the darkness above.

He heard no softly spoken conversation here, nor saw the indistinct forms of the six shipwrecked sailors, as he half expected. He wondered where they were. He moved over to the port side and walked along the bulwark.

He heard a muffled scuffle close ahead.

Pushing on he dimly made out two men holding a third one down. With an imprecation one of them rose and grabbing him by the throat, jammed him over the bulwark.

Jack struggled hard to extricate himself from the fellow's embrace, but the man held onto him with a bear's hug, and finally releasing his throat struck him a heavy blow with his fist over the temple, stunning him. When Jack came to his senses a few minutes later, he found himself gagged with a piece of oakum, and his captor

finishing the job of binding his arms to his sides.

Beside him was one of the sailors of the first watch, now nearly expired, similarly fixed.

A moment later the rascals who had done the trick to Jack and the other member of the crew of the Octopus moved away softly in the darkness.

"This is the work of a couple of those shipwrecked scoundrels," thought Jack, as he struggled in vain with his bonds. "I knew they were up to no good. What in thunder are they up to? Do they mean to try and capture the brig and run away with her?" The sounds of another struggle now reached his ears. It was soon over and silence reigned again on deck. Then Jack saw two phantom-like figures creep forward and ascend to the roof of the fore-castle.

The sound that presently floated aft on the night air convinced the boy that the rascals were putting the hatch over the entrance to the "sailors' parlor." After hauling a coil of heavy rope over the hatch, the men rejoined their companions in the waist of the brig.

The watch below and the one on deck had been secured by the six shipwrecked scamps, and the only man that remained free was the chief mate who had gone into the cabin for some purpose.

The wheel was in possession of one of the strangers, and he held the brig on her regular course. Presently the mate reappeared on deck. The crowd was waiting for him with belaying pins in their hands. A blow from one of them on the head from behind stretched him senseless on the deck, after which he was easily secured.

There remained now only the captain, the second mate, the cook and the carpenter, who slept in the cabin part of the vessel.

The leader of the rascals, after placing his men around the door of the cabin passage, entered the cabin and knocked on the door of the captain's stateroom. "Who's there?" asked the skipper, starting up in his berth.

"Jones," replied the man, in a gruff voice. "Mr. Parks wants to see you on deck. The barometer is fallin' and things look dirty to the east'ard."

"I'll be out in a moment," replied the captain.

The man outside slipped back on deck. Jack had seen the downing of the first mate, and he knew by the appearance of the rascals still around the entrance to the passage that they were looking for somebody else to come out.

Whether this person was the captain or the second mate he couldn't tell. He judged that both would be enticed on deck and secured, and that they would then finish by going to the passage rooms of the carpenter and the cook and making prisoners of them.

He could now see pretty well in the gloom, and presently saw the tall form of the skipper appear at the door.

As captain Snow stepped out on deck he was knocked down with as little ceremony as the chief mate had been treated.

"The ruffians are certainly after the possession of the brig," thought Jack, "and they'll get her, in fact they have her now."

The leader of the rascals and two men disappeared into the passage. They had gone to secure the second mate, and afterwards the carpenter and the cook.

It did not take them long to complete the job. The second mate had no suspicions of anything

wrong, and fell an easy victim. The other two were just as easily nabbed and tied up. Bill Bowling and the other members of the second mate's watch, Jack excepted, were still free of fetters, but they were confined below in the fore-castle, and were just as much prisoners as the rest of the ship's company, though they were as yet unaware of the fact, or what had happened. The villains, having no further need of secrecy, moved around the deck at their ease.

Finally the leader, after conferring with the man at the wheel came forward and ordered his companions to gather all the prisoners together between the two short ladders that communicated with the fore-castle deck.

Jack was the last picked up and dumped down in line, all being stretched out like so many corpses awaiting burial. The gags were taken out of the mouths of those who had been first made second mate had been captured without the necessary. Left by themselves the crew gave vent to their feelings in rather expressive language, all except Jack, who knew that no amount of cuss words would alter a very bad situation, and he wondered what the next move of the scoundrels would be.

The captain and the chief mate were unconscious from the blows they had received, but the second mate had been captured without the necessity arising for slugging him with a belaying-pin. It was now after midnight and the wind came fresher from the northeast. The brig began to pitch and roll in a regular rhythmic way with the seas. The leader of the six shipwrecked sailors went into the cabin, and after studying the chart with the air of one acquainted with navigation to some extent at least, mounted to the poop and altered the brig's course more to the westward, his object being to fetch the entrance to Magellan's Strait.

"I knew those villains were up to something," said Jack, after the sailors about him had tired of expressing their sentiments over the situation.

"If you knew it why didn't you report the matter to the first mate or the skipper?" asked the seaman on his right.

"Oh, I didn't actually know what the rascals intended doing," replied Jack. "I was merely suspicious of their looks and the way they hung together talking in an undertone. I told Bill Bowling about it, but he didn't think there was anything in it. He said the reason they kept to themselves was because they felt strange aboard this craft but would soon get over that feeling and mingle with us as if they had shipped in due course."

"Bill was a fool," growled the sailor, "as he'll find out afore long."

At that juncture there was heard a pounding on the fore-castle hatch. One or more of the watch below had woke up and finding the hatch on were making a racket to attract attention. No attention was paid to the noise by the fellows now in charge of the brig, though they could not help hearing it. The sound stopped for a while, and was then resumed in a louder way, as if two at least were thumping it. They were allowed to pound till they grew tired of it. There could scarcely be any doubt that the three men in the fore-castle were awake and much astonished at finding themselves battened in.

They resumed the pounding at intervals till daylight without result. The morning broke cool and cloudy, with the breeze holding strong and fair. About sunrise, though that luminary was not visible, the leader of the rascals came up to the group of prisoners, and singling out the cook pulled him away out of ear-shot of the others. After holding some talk with him the man was freed of his bonds and went into the galley to prepare breakfast for the six shipwrecked scoundrels.

"Jim ain't got no right to go back on us that way," grumbled a seaman. "He oughtn't to do nothin' for them chaps, but stick it out with us."

That seemed to be the sentiment of the other sailors, and they eyed the door of the galley in no pleasant way. Each and every one would have liked to have given the cook a piece of their mind. They were of the opinion that he hoped to curry favor with their captors, and the idea of such a thing went against their grain.

"Maybe he only did that for a blind," said Jack.

"A blind!" growled the man on his left. "What d'ye mean?"

"Now he's at liberty he may find some way of releasing us, don't you see," explained Jack.

"Maybe so, but that remains to be seen," replied another sailor.

However, the men ceased to regard the cook with bitter feelings, thinking there might be some truth in what the younger sailor said.

"We mustn't expect him to rush matters, for doubtless he'll be watched," went on Jack. "We must have patience. When the rascals are at breakfast he may find the chance to cut one of us loose and leave the knife, then if we're very cautious we may all get free, in which case we ought to be able to put up a good fight for the recovery of the brig."

"He don't need to leave no knife. We've all got our knives handy. All we want is half a chance to free ourselves and you can be there'll be somethin' doin' mighty soon," said the sailor.

In the course of an hour the cook had breakfast ready, and as soon as the fact became known, the captors of the brig, the helmsman excepted, gathered about the galley door to proceed to eat what was handed out to them.

CHAPTER III.—Sent Adrift.

By this time it was broad daylight. After having eaten all they wanted, the leader and three of his men went on the fore-castle deck armed with belaying-pins. The prisoners easily surmised what was about to happen. The coil of rope was removed and the hatch cover lifted. The first to appear up the ladder was Bill Bowling. He wanted to know why in thunder he and his companions had been kept below after midnight.

"Shut up!" returned the leader.

Bill looked at him in surprise, and was about to say something that would have jarred the atmosphere when he was unceremoniously seized by the collar and landed on deck, where two of the men proceeded to bind him in spite of his struggles. The other two were treated in the same way, and the three yanked down on the main deck as though they had no more feeling than sacks of potatoes.

"Are you fellers piruts or what?" roared Bill, in anger.

The leader, with an imprecation, smashed him in the jaw.

"Now will you shut that trap of yours?" he said.

Bill spat out a mouthful of blood and looked at the rascal scornfully.

"You blamed coward, I'd like to have the use of my hands jest two minutes, and I wouldn't leave enough of you to be swept up," he cried.

The leader turned on his heel and walked away.

"What's the meanin' of this, shipmates?" Bill asked, looking at the crew.

"It ain't hard to see, Bill," replied a sailor. "Them measly scamps we picked up out of the sea yesterday afternoon have gone and captured the brig."

Bill looked blank at this piece of information, which seemed apparent on its face. He saw the still unconscious forms of the captain and chief mate propped up against a corner of the bulwark and the rise of the forecastle, and he saw every man of the crew, excepting the cook, bound hard and fast. He cursed the six rescued men, and wanted to know what they expected to gain by committing such a crime on the high seas. Nobody could answer that question, unless it was the rascals themselves and they were not giving out any information on the subject. At that moment they were gathered in a group, consulting together. The result of their conference was that the brig's long boat was prepared for lowering. A butt of fresh water and some provisions were placed in her. Then the rascals proceeded to dump the captain, the two mates and the sailors one by one into her. When all but Jack and Bill Bowling had been put in, the leader decided that she wouldn't hold any more with safety. He then gave orders to lower away. As soon as the boat touched water, one of the rascals slipped down the falls and cast loose the stern tackle. Going forward he unshipped the other one, and holding on with his foot, and climbing up the falls regained the deck. After watching the longboat with its living freight drift astern, the ringleader of the enterprise turned his attention to Jack and Bill.

"Get out that small boat from the top of the galley," he said.

His companions proceeded to obey orders. It was the smallest boat on the brig, and was secured bottom upward on the roof of the cook-house. Being fairly light it was easily handled. Inside of a quarter of an hour it was attached to the falls used to lower the longboat. A breaker of water and some provisions were thrown into it, and all was ready.

"Now, you son of a sea cook," said the leader of the rascals, approaching Bill. "Get up and walk into that boat."

"So you're going to turn me adrift, are you?" replied the sailor. "I dare you to cut me loose on deck here, and let me have a crack at you."

"Stow your jaw and do as I told you, or I'll break your head with a belayin' pin," scowled the ringleader.

Bill saw there was no help for it but to obey orders, so he walked over to the boat and was boosted into her.

"Now, young fellow, get a move on you and follow," said the rascal, addressing Jack.

The young sailor made no reply but obeyed. It would have been useless for him to resist in face of the five villians. So he got into the boat. It was immediately lowered to the surface of the sea. One of the men slid down as before, cut Jack loose and told him to unship the forward tackle. He unhooked the stern one and clambered up after shoving the boat off. The brig, which had been hove to for the time being, was put on her course once more, leaving all the brig's rightful company, except the cook, afloat on the boundless South Atlantic. As the Octopus sailed away Jack freed Bill. The old sailor shook his fist after the retreating vessel, and said things that would not look well in print.

"Every mother's son of 'em will regret this," he said. "They can't go into no port with that craft without explainin' how they come to be afloat without cap'n nor mates. If they mean to turn pirut they'll be captured and hung. Here's hopin' they'll all go to perdition as fast as a fair breeze can carry them."

Bill pulled his pipe out of his pocket, charged and lit it, and then looked at Jack, in a reflective way.

"Well, shipmate," he said, "we're up ag'in it, you and me, and the good Lord only knows how we'll come out. We're afloat in a few planks, without chart or compass, on the broad ocean and in a partickerly bad part of it. We're somewhere off the southeast coast of Patygonia, but jest how far off I dunno. The best thing we can do is to try and jine the other boat."

"Where is the other boat?" asked Jack, looking around the horizon.

There was nothing in sight but the receding brig, half a mile or more distant.

"Why, she ought to be somewhere around close by," replied the shellback.

"I don't see anything of her," answered Jack. Bill took a look and then uttered an imprecation.

"There's a mist comin' up and she's hid behind it," he said. "As we don't know the exact point where she is we can't do nothin' but take to the oars to keep warm and steer for Patygonia, which must be somewhere yonder," and the sailor waved his arm in the direction of the brig.

"It will take us a long time to row there, I guess," said Jack.

"I reckon it will if we can do it, which I doubt. Our only chance is being picked up by some craft. If nothin' heaves in sight afore long we can consider ourselves ticketed for Davy Jones' locker."

He said nothing more for some minutes, but got out a pair of oars and began to take long, slow strokes. Jack followed his example, and the lone boat glided over the heaving sea, a mere speck on that broad expanse. The boy, now thrown back on his thoughts, began to realize the desperate situation he and his companion were in. It began to look as if his short seafaring experience was fated to end in a tragic manner. That he and Bill were headed for the port of missing men. He thought of his mother and sister in their little cottage in his native village dreaming about him as sailing the wide, wide sea in a stout vessel that would in a couple of months be reported among the marine arrivals at San Francisco. They had subscribed for a certain New York newspaper

which made a specialty of maritime intelligence, in order to note when the Octopus reached her far Western destination. Under present circumstances the Octopus would never arrive there. Just what would happen to her under the charge of the six shipwrecked rascals was a difficult question to figure on, and he didn't try to. If she was ever reported it would not be from San Francisco, but under circumstances that would cause his mother and sister the gravest alarm. And so while he thought bitter thoughts, and rowed in unison with his companion, the sea mist closed in around them and shut out the broad ocean and the clouds above from their sight.

CHAPTER IV.—The Derelict.

They kept up a steady pull to keep their blood in circulation, and when either grew tired he rested on his oars for awhile. They did not row like people who expected to reach the shore after a time, for they had no such hope. Their distance from the coast, the drift of the tide, and many other things conspired against such a desirable conclusion to their involuntary cruise. As Bill said, their sole chance of salvation lay in being picked up by some craft making for the Strait or Cape Horn. Several hours passed and Jack and Bill rowed almost steadily, with a mechanical stroke, to keep way the clammy chill that was in the misty air. They conversed little, for both were downhearted over the fate that seemed before them. At length the mist passed away to the westward, which was the direction they were heading, and a gleam of sunshine shone through a break in the clouds. Jack seemed to regard it as a favorable omen and his courage rose. As he cast his eyes around upon the vast expanse of ocean he suddenly paused in his rowing and gazed long and earnestly at something in the distance. It looked like a small vessel coming directly toward them astern.

"Look! Look! Bill! Yonder is a vessel, or my eyes deceive me. She's coming straight for us. We shall be saved after all," he cried exultantly.

Jack's words galvanized the old shellback into new life. He woke up from the brown study in which he had lost himself for the past hour and looked toward the spot indicated by the young sailor's outstretched arm.

"Ay, ay, shipmate, it's a sail all right, and headin' right for us. They can't miss us, for they're bound to pass within a pistol shot. We're in great luck—one chance in a million. Well, I always said it was better to be born lucky than rich."

They lay on their oars and eagerly watched the approaching vessel which seemed to be schooner-rigged. She was coming on fairly fast, but occasionally she yawed in a strange manner that seemed unaccountable to Bill.

"What the deuce is the matter with her?" he said. "There must be a lubber at the helm. Never seen such steerin' in my life before." As the craft got closer they made out that only a part of her sail spread to the wind—a jib and the canvas attached to the booms of the foremast.

An inverted British ensign was flying from the after spanker—a signal of distress.

"There appears to be somethin' the matter with yonder craft," said Bill. "She's lookin' for help. However, we can't be no wuss off aboard of her than we're in this here boat. The coast ain't so far off but we can reach it in her, while it would be a hopeless job to expect to fetch it in this boat."

"I hope she isn't sinking," said Jack. "She lies pretty close to the water."

"Sinkin', I reckon not. Leastaway I hope not, I can see now that her wheel is lashed to keep her before the wind. That's a bad sign. Looks as if she might be deserted. At any rate I don't see a soul on her deck."

"I'm willing to take chances aboard of her unless she's actually in a sinking condition whether she's deserted or not," said Jack. "She seems to have been swept by heavy seas for her bulwarks are smashed in many places, and I don't see a sign of a boat anywhere."

"There's a piece of canvas like a tent at the foremast which I don't see no reason to be there," said Bill after another long look. "She's a queer sort of hooker to my eye, and I'll bet what's comin' to me from the Octopus that she's a derelict, deserted by all hands."

"Then we may expect to find her in a sinking condition," replied Jack, in a tone of disappointment.

"Maybe not. Lots of vessels have been abandoned by their company thinkin' they were goin' to the bottom, and they've floated long enough to reach port."

"If there's any one aboard of her there is no indication of the fact. We'll have to pull a bit to the starboard to head her off, for she's falling off in that direction. Here's the sun again I'm thankful to see it, for it kind of puts heart into one," said Jack.

They pulled diagonally toward the schooner, now close at hand.

In a few minutes they were close enough to have tossed a biscuit aboard of her.

"Let's hail her and see what happens," said the young sailor.

"You've got a good pair of lungs, shipmate, try it yourself."

Jack made a funnel of his hands and shouted: "Schooner aho-o-oy!"

He repeated the hail several times, but without result.

"There ain't no one aboard of her," said Bill. "We'll pull alongside and board. Then maybe we'll be able to see what's the matter with her."

They applied themselves to a final effort with the oars, and Bill skillfully laid the boat alongside of the apparently deserted craft.

Making the painter fast to a splintered section of her bulwark they leaped on board.

Then a surprising thing happened.

The flap of the bunch of canvas at the foremast, which Bill had likened to a tent, was raised, and a bundle of rags rolled from under the covering across the deck till it fetched up against the lee bulwark, where it remained quite motionless.

"What in thunder is that?" ejaculated Bill, regarding the bundle in great astonishment.

"It seems to be alive, whatever it is," replied Jack.

Bill approached the animated bundle of rags

cautiously, as if he was half afraid it might spring at him.

When he got close to it he saw it was a boy, with a tough and wizened face.

A pair of particularly bright eyes looked at him, and followed every motion he made.

"Well, you hop-o'-my-thumb, what are you lyin' there for? Can't you get up?" said the sailor.

The strange lad, who was probably fourteen years of age, though at a short distance his face might easily have been taken for an old man's, made an effort to rise but it was a failure.

Bill stooped and lifting him up as he might a bundle of feathers, propped him against the bulwark. The boy gasped, rolled his eyes, and looked the picture of exhaustion. Jack now came up and gazed at the curious looking species of humanity.

"Water!" gurgled the boy.

"Why, he's famished for drink and food," said Jack. "I'll get our breaker aboard and give him a drink. The poor lad appears nearly at his last gasp."

Jack hastened to the boat and pulled the small keg of fresh water onto the schooner's deck. He also took a handful of crackers out of the provision bag. Filling a tin cup with water he brought it to the boy, and kneeling beside him put the cup to his parched and cracked lips.

The youth grabbed his hand convulsively and drank long and eagerly till he drained every drop. It seemed to revive him greatly.

"Strike me cold, but that tasted good," he said, in a kind of chipper way, while a feeble grin stole over his hard looking features.

"Are you the only one aboard this craft, my lad?" inquired Bill.

"I vish I vos," returned the youth, in a dialect of the lowest grade of London life. "The cabin is full of 'em. Oh, crickey, vot a sight they must be by this time with the worms crawling all over them. Strike me blind! I couldn't look at 'em again, no not if yer vos to fill my pockets with sov'rin's."

"What do you mean, sonny? What is the cabin full of?" asked Bill, as Jack handed the youth several crackers.

He pounced on the food, like a hawk on a chicken, and began eating ravenously, coughing and choking over his efforts.

Jack ran and got him some more water.

"Here, dip the crackers in this and don't eat so fast," said the young sailor.

The strange youth grabbed the tin cup, took a drink and then continued munching the crackers as fast as he could. Bill saw it was useless to press him with questions till he had in a measure satisfied his hunger.

"You stay with him Jack, and I'll take a peep into the cabin and see what's there," he remarked.

"Vot a nerve you've got!" spoke the boy. "Vot wouldn't I give to be like you. It's the coves vot is bold as brass vot gets along in this world."

Bill grinned at the boy's remarks.

"He's a Britisher, sure enough. I've seen chaps like him along the London docks and under the arches of the Thames," he said.

"Ave yer?" said the boy, cocking his head saucily. "Hany vun can tell vot you is—a bloomin' Yankee. I 'opes yer come to take me orf this blazin' vessel. Vun day more it would 'ave been all hup vith me, dash my vig it it wouldn't."

Bill was about to say something, but changed his mind and walked off toward the cabin to investigate conditions there.

"Vot a chap 'e is!" said the boy, following Bill with his eyes. "Vait till 'e sees vot's in the cabin and if it don't give 'im a turn may I never see Radcliff 'ighway ag'in."

"What's in the cabin?" asked Jack curiously.

"Vot's in there? Oh, crickey! Vy, 'arf a dozen dead uns."

"Who are the—the cap'n and part of the crew?"

"Vell, the capt'in is von, and the mate vos another, and the cookie too, that's three. The others is passengers. I vos a passenger, too, by vay of the 'old. And didn't I catch it 'ot vhen they diskivered me under 'atches? Oh, no, of course not," and the speaker grinned like a famished hyena. At that moment Bill came out of the cabin much quicker than he went in.

"Holy Moses!" he cried. "There's six corpses in there, and they're a sight."

"Vot did I tell ye?" chuckled the British youth.

"Ow would yer like to be a veek aboard this 'ooker, vith sich company as that? There's food and vater plenty in the pantry, but I wouldn't go near it, no, not to save my life."

"Do you mean to say that there's lots to eat aboard and you wouldn't touch it on account of them dead men?" asked Bill.

"Strike me blind if I vould. I wouldn't go near that cabin, not if I know'd I'd be made Lord Mayor of Lunnon," replied the youth, with a positive shake of the head.

"How came those six people to die, all at once it would seem, and where is the crew?" asked Jack.

"The cabin is in a terrible state," put in Bill.

"Looks to me as if there had been a wholesale fight there, and murder into the bargain."

"And a precious bloomin' fight it vos, blow me tight if it vasn't," said the London boy. "The crew got their monkey up over a jawin' the capt'in gave 'em, and swore they'd 'ave 'is life. The mate, and the cookie, and the passengers stuck by 'im, and then they 'ad it 'ot and 'eavy. The capt'in got 'is pistol hout and shot one of 'em deader than a door nail. That made the crew 'otter than blazes. They drove the capt'in and 'is backers into the cabin with their knives. I vos the honly vun left on deck, and, crickey! vasn't I skeered vhen I 'eard the row agoin' on, and the yells and cries as the crew soaked it to 'em. I got sich a funk on that I hid away under a bunk in the 'old forward. Strike me if I didn't think it vould be my turn next, but it vasn't. In an hour or two the rumpus stopped and I didn't 'ear another sound. When I ventured hout, cautious like, as I used to do in the 'Ighvay vhen the bobbies vos a-lookin' for me, the deck vos clear like it is now, and there vasn't never a sign of the crew. When I inwestigated I seen they'd taken to the longboat and cut their luckies."

"What did you do then?" asked Jack.

"Nothin' for avhile, then I vent into the cook-house and ate vot I found there, vich vasn't much, considerin' I 'ad a 'ealthy appetite. After that I went into the 'old ag'in and vent to sleep. In the mornin' I ventured into the cabin, and such a sight! There vos the capt'in, and the rest of 'em lyin' stark and stiff. I guv a yell and run hout. I stayed all that day forward, gettin' more

'ungry every minute, but I wouldn't go near the cabin for nothink. Next day I vos so peckish that I got desprit like and I tried to get into the pantry vich is near the cabin door. I vos jest agoin' in vhen, vill yer believe it, von of them corpses tried to git hup. I give hout a yell and run ag'in. I wouldn't try it hon any more and so I would 'ave starved if yer 'adn't come aboard. Where's yer vessel?"

The speaker pulled himself to his feet and looked out over the ocean, but of course saw no vessel.

"I'm sorry to say that we have no vessel," replied Jack.

"Vy, where did yer come from then?" asked the young Britisher, with a look of astonishment.

"We were set adrift from our brig in that boat," answered Jack.

"Crickey! Vot for?"

Jack told him their story as briefly as possible.

"Vhy, if them chaps vot yer rescued vasn't the same uns vot belonged to this 'ere 'ooker, and killed the capt'in and the rest," cried the London lad.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Jack, looking at Bill, while the old shellback returned the look with interest.

CHAPTER V.—A Floating Morgue.

"I dunno that I'm surprised to learn the kind of scoundrels they are," said Bill. "It ain't more'n you'd expect from chaps actin' they way they did with us."

"That's right," nodded Jack. "It's a wonder they didn't murder us, instead of taking the trouble to set us adrift. Look here, youngster, how many days is it since the crew of this schooner killed the captain, mate and passengers and skipped out?"

"'Ow many? A veek," replied the British youth.

"That shows they were afloat about six days," said Jack, turning to his companion.

"What's your name?" asked Jack, turning to the boy again.

"Vhy, afore I got into trouble last vinter I used to cut a shine vith any Vest End swell, and I vos everywhere known as 'Flash Barney' and 'the Plummy Un.'"

"Do you mean to say that you're a young crook?" asked Jack, with a look of disgust.

"Is that vot yer call the knowin' uns in yer bloomin' country?" asked Barney.

"Knowing ones! A crook is a criminal. Are you one?"

Master Barney cocked his eye at Jack and grinned.

"If yer mean 'ave I been in the work'us I'll say I 'ave," he replied.

"Is that a house of correction?"

"It's a 'ouse vot yer can't git hout off till yer time is hup."

"I see. What were you sent there for?"

"For playin' the cat's meat dodge too often," grinned Barney.

"What do you mean by the cat's meat dodge?"

"Vot, bless yer refreshin' innercence, and this 'ere's s'posed to be the hage of edication!" replied the boy scornfully. "The cat's meat dodge

is a prime lay. Jest yer listen to me. I vorks it this vay: I goes up to a voman vot sells cat's meat and buys ha'porth vorth. I vaits till a crowd gets around me and then I begins a-heatin' it ravenous like, jest as if I was starvin' for summat to put in my stummick. When the people axes me vot I vos a-doin' I hup and tells 'em I vos starvin' mad. They takes the stuff away from me and gives money to buy vot they calls wholesome vittles. Vun time a silly old bloke gave me a bob, and I got twelve shillin's altogether, so I had a fust-rate supper, a blow-hout of tripe and in-yuns and beer, and I spent the evenin' at a penny gaff. Vot do yer think of that?" and the boy regarded Jack with a leer of satisfaction.

"I think you're a hard case," replied Jack, turning away. "Say, Bill, what are we going to do? This schooner seems to be charnel-house, but it's better to stay aboard of her than to take to the boat again. If we did that we'd have to take this young Londoner along which wouldn't help matters."

"We'll stay, shipmate, for the hooker seems to be all right, except for the state of the cabin, which is worse than a morgue. The first thing in order will be to toss them corpses overboard, which ain't a nice job, seein' the state they're in," replied the sailor.

"I suppose we'll have to tackle it," replied Jack, not relishing the prospect. "I'll go in and take a look at them to try and nerve myself for the business."

Jack, who had as much nerve as any one, started aft and disappeared into the cabin. It was a terrible sight that met his view, but as he was looking for it he was not surprised at the scene of death and confusion in the place. It fairly sickened him, and he was forced to beat a speedy retreat.

"I'll tell you how we'll get rid of them, Bill," he said, on rejoining his companion. "The less we handle them the better. We'll tie a length of line to their legs, drag them out through the passage on deck, and then launch them overboard through that break in the bulwark."

"That's a good plan, matey. I didn't fancy the idea of pickin' 'em up and carryin' 'em out as I supposed we'd have to do," replied Bill.

"Well take the bag of provisions out of the boat first, and haul her around aft," said Jack.

This they proceeded to do, and then cutting off a long piece of thin line they entered the cabin and began their repulsive job of getting rid of the dead men. After the first corpse was launched into the sea they took a short rest, and they did the same after dragging out each of the others. At length the last body was disposed of and they uttered a sigh of relief. Barney watched them from the fore-castle deck, which was as far away as he could get without crawling out on the short bowsprit, a feat he didn't care to attempt. When Jack and Bill finished their grewsome work they washed up in a bucket of sea water which they drew aboard for the purpose. Then they woked up to the fact that they were hungry. Instead of tackling the provision bag, which contained only a small hunk of salt horse, as it is called, and several pounds of crackers, they started to explore the pantry. Here to their satisfaction they found a plentiful supply of good provisions intended for the use of the captain, mate and passengers.

There was a case, already opened, of cognac, and two full cases of French wine, which, strange to say, the murderous crew had overlooked. There were cases of canned goods, and various delicacies that looked mighty good to the hungry Americans. There was a case of bottled water, one of which had been tapped. Jack and Bill carried a supply of eatables forward to the galley where they met Barney.

"According to your statement you were a stow-away, weren't you?" said Jack.

Barney admitted the fact.

"How came you to run away to sea?"

"Me run away to sea!" replied Barney. "Not much."

The boy said the bobbies had chased him down to the docks and he had gone aboard the schooner to hide away from them. While he was there he had fallen asleep. When he woke up the hatch was on and he couldn't get out. He soon realized that the vessel was under way. He made a racket to attract attention, but there was such a noise and apparent confusion on deck as the vessel slipped down the river that no one heard him. In trying to find some way of getting out of the hold he got caught in the cargo, and the schooner was in the channel before he got free, twenty-four hours later. Then a gale was running and he was knocked about for many hours. In fact he was nearly dead when he was discovered late on the second day. It was then too late for the captain to put him ashore, so he was pressed into the service of the cook, and made to wait on the table and clean up. That was the story he told at the door of the galley while Jack was making a pot of coffee and Bill was opening the canned goods and getting things ready for supper. Bill gave Barney a glass of cognac diluted with a little water to brace him up, and soon after they sat down to supper. The British boy declared that it was a bang-up meal, and he looked a hundred per cent better after he had eaten his share. Jack and Bill next turned their attention to the vessel, which had evidently suffered from a spell of very rough weather. Indeed, it was the three days' gale through which she had passed which was the cause of the outbreak on the part of the crew. Barney said all hands had been worn out by the strain, and the chap they looked up to as their leader went to the captain and asked for an extra supply of rum, claiming that they needed it after what they had been through. The skipper had already served out to them what he considered enough and refused to give them any more. This started the trouble that ended in wholesale murder. Bill unlashed the wheel and put the schooner on a course that he judged would bring her to a port on the southeast coast of Patagonia, while Jack trimmed the forward sails a bit, and tidied things about the deck. It was now growing dark and the weather looked squally to the eastward.

"We'd better get the boat aboard, don't you think, Bill?" suggested Jack. "It wouldn't do to lose her, for there isn't any aboard."

The sailor agreed with the idea. He lashed the wheel in the right position and then helped Jack hoist the light boat aboard through the broken bulwark. It took all their strength to do it, but they accomplished it at last, and turning the boat upside down, lashed it as well as they could to the side of the galley.

"You'd better turn in now, Jack," said Bill. "I'll stand the first watch till midnight, then I'll call you to take your turn till daylight. It may be I'll have to turn you out sooner, as it looks dirty to the east'ard. If it doesn't blow too hard I won't disturb you till my spell is up as near as I can calculate."

Jack was glad to go below for a few hours' rest, as he hadn't slept at all the night before, so he made no objection to the program outlined by the sailor. Barney followed him down into the fore-castle, and a quarter of an hour later both of them were sound asleep.

CHAPTER VI.—Ashore on the Rocks.

After Jack and Barney went into the fore-castle Bill Bowling, with his pipe between his lips, steered the schooner through the thick darkness of the overcast night. The last thing Jack had done before turning in was to lash a lighted lantern to the standing rigging forward, and this swung like a glow-worm before the old sailor's eyes, and kind of kept him company. Although Bill had all the superstitions of a sailor, he was not much disturbed by the knowledge that six people had lost their lives in a tragic manner in the little cabin of the schooner. But though he was entirely alone aft he did not people the air about him with the ghosts of the six dead men whose bodies floated about miles astern on the surface of the heaving ocean. The fact of the matter was he was too anxious about the safety of the craft to think of anything else, for his experienced eye had told him, as darkness closed in, that a heavy gale was coming on, and with only himself and Jack to handle the schooner he could not conjecture how they would come out of it. As time passed the wind grew heavier and the seas rose about the vessel. The night grew blacker if anything. The only thing that Bill could make out at all was the twinkling of the lantern ahead, and the gleam of the light in the binnacle under his eye. Had a landsman been in his position he would have been terrified at the utter loneliness and weirdness of his position, not speaking at all of its dangers; but Bill had been through the same mill too often to be at all disturbed by his peculiar surroundings. When his pipe went out he put it in his pocket, took a hitch in his trousers and a fresh grasp on the spokes of the wheel. As soon as he judged from his rough calculation of time that it was about midnight he lashed the wheel and went forward and called Jack. The young sailor responded at once, for he had enjoyed six full hours of sleep.

"It's blowing hard," he remarked, as he stuck his head out of the fore-castle hatch, "and it's as dark as a blacking bottle."

"It'll blow harder before mornin', so I don't mean to turn in but keep you company aft," replied the sailor.

Jack, though a nervy lad, was not sorry to have Bill near him. There was no telling what might happen before daylight as things stood aboard the already damaged schooner. Bill squatted down near the companion-way with his broad back against the rise of the cabin and filled and lighted his pipe. He smoked while Jack steered, but neither said a word. The roar of the wind and dash of the sea prevented conversation. So the

hours passed and the weather grew worse and worse. The schooner, even under short sail, flew before the storm like a frightened bird. They supposed they were heading for the coast of Patagonia. Instead of which they were running for the southeastern coast of Terra del Fuego, with its many outcropping islands, of which the southernmost one represented Cape Horn. They were nearer land than they had any idea of. One of the islands of the archipelago was looming up ahead of them in the blackness of the night, and their course would carry them straight upon it. Flogged by the cold wind and the spray that came over the taffrail behind him, Jack's position was a mighty uncomfortable one. His fingers were becoming numb as they grasped the spokes, and he had all he could do to hold the schooner on her course.

"Will daylight never come?" he gritted through his set lips.

And yet bad as his situation was how would he and his companion have fared had they faced that gale in their cockleshell of a boat in which they had been sent adrift? Long since they would have gone to the bottom, and at that moment the surges would have been singing a requiem over their corpses. Jack realized that fact and it gave him courage to face the perils of the night. Bill had fallen into a doze, with his body leaning over toward the companion-way, when suddenly and without warning the schooner struck on the rocks with a fearful crash. A heavy sea lifted and carried her forward many yards and then she stopped and heeled over. The shock threw Bill down into the cabin already flooded with water, and tossed Jack completely over the wheel and down the stairs after him. The boy would probably have broken his neck but for the fact that a huge wave followed him and broke his fall. As it was he was dashed with some violence against the port side of the vessel which occupied the position that the floor should have, for the schooner now lay on her side. With the cabin filling with water, Jack and Bill had to battle for their lives like a pair of rats in a trap that was being immersed. They were unaware that both were in the same predicament, and they swam around their narrow confines in a desperate effort to find lodgment somewhere. Their impression was that the schooner was going slowly to the bottom of the sea, but that idea didn't prevent them struggling for the last few moments of existence they imagined left to them. Such was their awful predicament when another heavy sea swept down into the cabin with resistless force. It caught the two luckless swimmers and carried them through the short passage out onto the rocks in the midst of which the craft was jammed with her bows high in the air. They fetched up in the wreckage of the foremast which, like the aftermast, had snapped close off to the deck, and with the frenzy of drowning persons grasped the ropes and hung on for dear life. Still neither was aware of the close proximity of the other, and it is doubtful if either thought of his companion at that time, for their attention was wholly absorbed in the effort to maintain their hold if they could. The roar of the wind and sea was in their ears, and death by drowning before their mental vision. This was their position when day slowly broke and discovered them to each other.

"Jack, is that really you?" asked the sailor, wiping the spray from his eyes with the back of one of his hands.

"Bill, you here! Lord, how glad I am to see you!" responded the boy.

They spent several moments congratulating each other on his escape from a watery grave.

"Where do you suppose we are, Bill? I see rocks all around us."

"Blamed if I know, matey," replied the shellback. "We're ashore somewhere, maybe on the coast of Patygonia."

"We've had a mighty narrow escape for our lives," said Jack.

"You can take your davy on that," was the answer.

"But we're not out of the woods yet."

"Not by a long chalk."

"I'm afraid Barney is lost. I don't see any sign of him anywhere."

"Likely as not he is, though the for'ard part of the hooker is hangin' clear of the sea."

"He'd be clinging up there somewhere if he was alive."

"I reckon he would. London'll never see him ag'in."

"Poor little fellow, he was a tough nut, but for all that I feel sorry for him."

"Maybe he's better off. Them kind of chaps ain't much good. He was a crook by nature and habits. If he hadn't been fetched to sea he'd probably be in jail by this time. I know what them chaps are. They're the scum of London, and give the bobbies over there no end of trouble."

"I think the gale is breaking, Bill."

"Dunno but it is. I hope so at any rate. We can't hold on here many hours."

"I wonder where the cap'n, mates and the rest of the crew of the Octopus are?"

"The Lord only knows. At the bottom of the Atlantic, I s'pose."

"Then their deaths rest on the heads of the rascals who stole the brig."

"That won't worry them none, with six other corpses they're accountable for."

"Who knows but they're lost, too, with the brig? The gale has been a fierce one, and it surely overtook them."

"I reckon that it did. Here's hopin' that the hull of 'em is shakin' hands with Old Nick at this moment, and preparin' for a good roast."

"It isn't more than they deserve, the villains!"

"Say, Jack, let's try and crawl out of this. We'll be safer higher up."

It was fairly light by this time, and they could see all about them with ease. The schooner lay under them on her side, almost wholly out of water except for the rush of the incoming waves that ran halfway up her hull, but which would subside when the gale blew itself out and the sea grew less violent. Jack welcomed any change that would improve their situation.

"All right. I'm with you," he said.

"We'll make for the fok's'l deck and see if we can find any sign of Barney. It looks to me as if the hatch was closed. If it is he must be inside. Maybe we'll find him alive and kickin'. Them London street gamins are hard to do up."

"I shall be glad to know that he isn't lost in spite of his bad record," replied Jack, following Bill's lead as the old shellback proceeded to extri-

cate himself from the tangled mass of wreckage and made his way toward the fore-castle of the stranded schooner.

The incoming waves helped them forward, but they had to look out that when the water receded it didn't pull them back. Thus by degrees they roade their way up the rocks until they got beyond the run of the tide. Both saw that the fore-castle hatch was shut tight, so they judged that the British youth was inside, unless he had crawled out through a hole that might have been stove in the bows. With considerable difficulty they reached the hatch and Bill tried to open it, but found it was jammed in such a way that he could not move it. He pounded on it with his hairy fist and listened. In about a minute he heard a succession of answering thumps.

"He's in there and alive," said the sailor.

"Can't you open the hatch?" said Jack.

"Not with my hands. It's jammed tight. We must get a pile of wreckage and pry it off."

A piece of wood suitable for the purpose was soon found and their united exertions succeeded in removing the hatch.

"Hello, below there, my hearty!" cried Bill, looking down into the dark fore-castle. "Crawl up and I'll give you a hand."

Barney lost no time in trying to get out of his prison.

"Oh, crickey!" he exclaimed, as his head appeared above the combing. "Hain't I glad to get hout of that bloomin' 'ole. Vot's 'appened? I vos snoozing away like an innocent kiddy when all at vunce I vos avakened by sich a crash that I thought the world vos comin' to a hend. I vent flyin' through the air like I 'ad been kicked by a 'orse, and my 'ead 'it the floor of the 'ooker so 'ard that it knocked me hout vorse than if I 'ad been hup ag'in the mawleys of the 'Pimlico Pet,' which 'e's a good un, yer can take my vord on it, for I've seen 'im put 'em to sleep with a prime huppercut as fast as they come hup."

"Get out and you'll see what's happened," replied Bill.

"Vhy, may I never nick a viper ag'in if ve hain't 'igh and dry ashore," cried Barney in astonishment. "Where 'ave ve got to?"

"I dunno, unless we're somewhere along Patygonia."

"Where is Patygonia?" asked Barney.

"At the extreme end of South America," explained Jack.

"Crickey! Vot a pity my edication vos neglected. I never 'eard of the bloomin' place before. Vell, vot of it? All I care about is to get back to Lunnion ag'in. Von't I 'ave a story to tell the blokes vot I know. Oh, no, of course not, not at all."

"Well, what shall we do next, Bill?" asked Jack.

"Climb on the top of the rocks and see if we can make out our bearin's."

"Lead the way then and we'll follow."

Bill accordingly began to climb beyond the schooner's bows, and Jack and the irrepressible Barney trailed along after him.

CHAPTER VII.—The Hut in the Wood.

When they reached the top of the rocks they saw a well-wooded country reachin' away to the

west. To their right and left curved the shore in a way that seemed to indicate that they were on an island. Still they were not sure of that fact as they could not make out what was on the other side of the trees.

"If this here ain't Patygonia it's an island, and if it's an island I wouldn't be surprised if it was one of the Terra del Fuego group to the south of the Strait," said Bill.

"Suppose we are on one of those islands, what are our chances of rescue?" said Jack.

"Mighty slim. Ships don't put in at them, 'cause there ain't no reason for it. There ain't no towns nor ports, nor anybody to do business with. They say that there ain't more than 2,000 natives altogether on the archipelago, which consists of eleven large islands and twenty small ones. The savages on many of the islets are cannibals, as I told you aboard the brig, and if we fell in with any of them it would be all day with us."

"I'm afraid we've only jumped from the frying-pan into the fire by going ashore on this coast," replied Jack, who, from the old sailor's words, thought matters looked very serious for them.

"If this here is Patygonia, we mayn't be so bad off, though the natives ain't any too friendly where they see they have the upper hand; but if we're on one of them Terra del Fuego islands there ain't much chance for us."

"What do you think we'd better do, Bill—stay around the wreck on the chance that some craft might heave in sight and take us off in answer to our signals, or start ahead and explore the country to see whether we're on an island or not?" asked Jack.

"We might not see a sail in a month, leastaway close enough in for her people to make out our signals."

"Then you think we'd better inspect the shore inland?"

"I reckon; but there's no call to be in a hurry about it. We've got to provide ourselves with somethin' to eat first. If we're on one of them islands we shan't find a dinner hangin' on a tree waiting for us to help ourselves. There hain't no fruit trees in this part of the world."

"What do the natives live on?"

"Shell-fish, I reckon, wild-fowl, wild celery, spoonwort, and a kind of globular fungus which I've seen growing around the chief trees of King Charles's South Land when I was ashore there, and which grows on all the islands, I was told. I reckon there is other stuff they eat, too. They're used to things while we ain't, so we'd be apt to starve while they went around with full stomachs. At any rate that was the fate that overtook a missionary party that came to the big island to convert the natives. They were left without supplies so long that they all starved to death. That shows you what we can expect if we're in the archipelago."

"That's a cheerful prospect, I must say," said Jack.

"Oh crickey! Vhy vos I hever carried horf from Hold England?" put in Barney. "This here is vurser nor the treadmill at Portland vich keeps yet a-vorking yer legs all the time vether ye wants to or not."

At that moment the clouds broke away and

the sun came out, gilding the heaving ocean with a sheen of gold.

"The gale has about spent itself," said Jack.

"I reckon. We'd better go down to the galley and see if we can find anything to eat there. The door is turned upward so I don't see how anythin' in it could have fallen out," said Bill.

As all three were pretty hungry they wasted no further time upon the uninteresting landscape inland, but made their way with due caution down to the vessel's deck, which lay at an angle of about fifty degrees. Sliding down against the cook-house they looked in at the doorway and found, as they expected, everything in confusion.

All its movable contents were thrown in a heap to port. Jack went in and hunted the stuff over for the canned goods, bag of crackers and salt-horse they had brought away from the brig, and particularly the bottle of cognac Bill had opened specially for Barney the afternoon previous. He was afraid the bottle was broken and its contents spilled. After some trouble the three cans containing preserved beef were brought to light, and soon after Jack lighted on the bag. Finally he located the brandy bottle and discovered that it was intact. He handed it up to Bill, who took a hearty swig and then passed it to Barney. He showed so much relish for it that Bill had to take it away from him.

"Hold hard, you young sea cook," he said. "D'ye want yourself drunk?"

"Vell, vot of it? Vot's the diff'rence so long's yer 'happy?" replied Barney, saucily.

"You've had all you're goin' to for the present," said Bill, handing the bottle down to Jack, who put it in the cold ashes of the stove, and handed Bill a can of meat he had opened.

"Here's some crackers," he said. "That ought to be enough for you and Barney. If it isn't you can have a portion of this can."

The three then proceeded to make their breakfast.

"There'll be no dishes to wash this trip, shipmate," grinned Bill. "Hand up a couple of them forks."

Breakfast over, they sat on the side of the galley to give the sun a chance to dry their clothes. Bill found a chunk of smoking tobacco in his pocket and laid that out to dry so that he could enjoy a smoke later on. Barney did most of the talking. He enlightened his companions with reminiscences of low London life, and seemed to glory in the many smart dodges he had played off on the police when chased by them. Owing to his cleverness he had only once appeared before the Bow Street magistrate, but that was the time he was sent to the workhouse for six months.

Their clothes dried in the course of a couple of hours, by which time the sea had gone down quite a bit, and the wind had moderated to a fair breeze. Observing that the water no longer flooded the entrance passage to the cabin, Jack said he was going to make an inspection of the pantry. There was quite a supply of food in the room, most of which being in cans or sealed glass jars could not be injured by the sea water. It was necessary that an inventory be taken of their food supply, and measures taken to make it hold out as long as possible. So Jack left his two companions on the galley and made his way to the pantry. Here everything was in confusion, but

the young sailor straightened things out as best he could, and figuring up the supplies decided that there was enough to last them for perhaps three weeks with ordinary economy. Then he returned to report.

"I reckon we ought to find a place to stow the stuff," said the sailor. "The natives are liable to come to the shore for shellfish at any time, supposin', of course, that we're on an island. If they saw this wreck they'd strip it of everything that they could get at and then we'd be left in the lurch, supposin' again that they didn't nab us at the same time."

"Do you mean that we ought to hide it about the rocks?" asked Jack.

"We'd better investigate the neighborhood beyond the rocks first, say further up the shore among the trees yonder," and the sailor waved his hand in a northerly direction. "We want to make our headquarters close to the sea in case a vessel was to turn up, which is about the only chance we have to be taken off."

"Then let's start out and hunt up a safe spot."

This suggestion being in line with Bill's ideas the three started up the rocks again. The rocky shore ended in a beach a hundred yards away, and toward that point they took their way. The wood came down within a hundred yards of the water, and entering it they looked around for a spot suitable for their purpose.

"Hello!" cried Jack. "Isn't that a hut yonder?"

"Looks like it, shipmate. Maybe there's natives livin' around here. We had best be cautious," said Bill.

Approaching the hut slowly, they soon made out that it was deserted. There wasn't a sign of a native anywhere around. Entering the hut they found every evidence that it had once been occupied by civilized persons.

"I guess the natives don't come over here, for if they had found this shack they would have carried off all that's in it," said Bill, looking at a variety of articles that had clearly been landed from some vessel, presumably a wreck that had gone ashore on the beach. The hut looked as if it had not occupied for some time. There was a rude fireplace with a pile of dead ashes in it at one end of the hut. Beside it stood two spades, an iron three-legged kettle, a coil of rope, several blocks and other nautical articles. There was a bunk on either side built of dried leaves covered with a pair of blankets. In a box was a fishing line complete, a sailor's sewing kit, and a variety of other things, including two rusty table knives and two forks, two tin plates, two tin cups, and several common spoons. The hut was well built of ship's timbers, and on the whole was quite a find for the castaways.

"This will be just the thing for us," said Jack. "It's dry and snug. Barney can fetch a bed for himself from the fok's'l of the schooner, and we'll soon be able to convey all the provisions, and such other things as we need from the galley, here. We couldn't have built so good a hut ourselves with all the timber at our command."

"Right you are, shipmate. I reckon we'll be well fixed with this shack for our headquarters," returned the old salt in a tone of satisfaction.

They went on a bit further through the wood, which they found ended abruptly in that direction at a wide creek, then they returned to the

schooner. They spent the rest of the day carrying stores to the hut where they slept that night in peace and apparent security.

CHAPTER VIII.—Captured By Cannibals.

During the following two days they stuck to the shore and employed themselves removing everything of any importance they could get on board the schooner to the immediate vicinity of the hut, for they could get little more than the provisions in the shack, and leave room for their own accommodation. They covered the rest of the stuff with a sail as a precaution in case it should come on rain. They gathered a huge pile of wood in a kind of bowl on the highest point of the rocks, below which the schooner lay, to use as a bonfire, hoping thereby to attract attention on board any ship, or other craft, that have in sight and approached within reasonable distance of the shore. On the morning of the fourth day after they had been cast away on that coast, Jack and Bill, leaving Barney in charge of the hut and the collected property, started out to explore the country with the view of trying to find out whether they were on an island or the main shore of South America. Laying their course by the sun they made a bee-line across the open ground that lay between the rocks along the shore and the long line of woods perhaps a quarter of a mile away.

"If this is an island we ought to see the water on the other side of them trees unless we're on King Charles' South Land. As that there island has over 20,000 square miles of surface it would take some tall walkin' to go across it."

"Yes, I guess it would," replied Jack, with a smile.

"It's a great deal larger than all the other islands and islets put together. In fact most of the islands are smaller than the land we see around us," went on Bill.

At this point they entered the woods and steering straight through the trees soon came out on an open space facing an arm of the ocean, and establishing the fact beyond a doubt that they were on a comparatively small island. To their right the volcanic nature of the island was shown in a low hill with a crater at the summit. The moment Bill saw it he cried out that they were on one of the islands of the Terra del Fuego archipelago as sure as they lived.

"As we haven't seen the sign of a native yet it is possible this may be one of the uninhabited islands."

"It is to be hoped it is," replied Jack, "since I, for my part, have no desire for an introduction to the savages who live in the archipelago."

"When I say uninhabited, shipmate, I don't mean to say that any of the islands are always without the presence of the natives. Them cannibal chaps have a way, I've been told, of moving from one island to another for the sake of variety, I suppose. Sometimes they do it merely for the purpose of picking a scrap with some other tribe. The victors then hold a barbecue over the remains of those who happened to turn up their toes in the scrimmage, whether they be friend or foe, which shows that their object was merely to provide themselves with a square meal of human flesh," said Bill, wagging his head in a sagacious way.

As the old salt concluded, Jack happened to cast his eyes along the beach.

"Why, there's a small boat just grounding on the shore," he said, pointing. "I'm going over to see if there's anything in it. If it contains a pair of oars we can row back to our headquarters, which will give us the chance to partly circumnavigate the island without the trouble of walking."

Bill followed the young sailor down to the water's edge. The boat did hold a pair of oars and also, much to their surprise, a pair of rifles of the magazine brand.

"This is a dandy find, Bill. We'll be able to defend ourselves now in case any natives should turn up and show a disposition to molest us," said Jack.

They examined the magazines and found that there were twelve cartridges in each, the weapons not having been discharged since they were loaded.

"This looks very much like the rifle that Cap'n Snow, of the Octopus, brought aboard the day before we left New York. Mr. Jones, the first mate, also brought a similar gun. I carried 'em both down into their staterooms, with two boxes of cartridges," said the old salt, regarding the weapon he held in his hand attentively.

"The ones the cap'n and mate bought were probably the same style of rifle as these," replied Jack. "That's why they look familiar to you."

"I reckon you're right, matey. Of course these couldn't be the same guns. I wonder how that boat came here with the rifles in her? There must be white people somewhere in the neighborhood. Maybe there's a vessel anchored near the north or south shore."

"The trend of the tide is from the south, so the boat must come from that direction," said Jack, in some excitement. "We'd better get into her and row in that direction. It will be great luck for us if there's a vessel ready to take us off so soon."

Bill was just as eager as Jack for a speedy release from the island, so they lost no time in getting into the boat and rowing toward the southeast. After proceeding perhaps a quarter of a mile, Jack pointed to what appeared to be footprints leading up the shore from the water's edge. Their interest as well as curiosity was aroused and Jack pulled close in to take a closer look at the footprints.

"If they are the imprints of bare feet we'll know they must have been made by some of the natives, but if we see the print of shoes we may consider they were made by civilized people," said Jack.

"I reckon," said Bill, nodding his head.

Jack sprang out of the boat and looked at the marks, deeply impressed in the sand. There, clear as day, was the shape of several boot soles and heels.

"Jump asore, Bill. These were made by boots. There are white men on the island, and we can't do better than to remain around here till they come back. This boat is evidently theirs, and getting loose somehow from its moorings drifted to the spot where we found it. There surely must be some vessel not far away."

Bill came ashore and tied the painter to a rock near the water's edge, then he and Jack looked around the open space that side of the wood, but nothing in the shape of a human being was visible.

They walked up to where a solitary tree stood in advance of its fellows and stopped there to await the expected return of the white strangers. In a few minutes Jack's gaze was attracted to a spot perhaps a dozen feet away where something glittered brightly in the sunlight.

"What you lookin' at, shipmate?" asked Bill.

"What do you suppose that is shining yonder?" asked the boy.

"How could I tell? A piece of metal, I reckon, that was washed ashore."

"Well, I'm going to find out," said Jack.

He walked over, stooped down, and picked something up. Then he gave a shout.

"Come here, Bill, quick—the sand is full of gold coin," he cried.

The sailor rushed over, only half comprehending the meaning of his excitement. When he saw the gold pieces in Jack's hand, and the sand at the boy's feet alive with the same things, he was fairly dumbfounded.

"May I be——"

That was as far as he got with his exclamation, for at that moment a score or more nearly naked savages armed, with wicked-looking clubs, burst from the wood with guttural cries, and advanced upon them in a menacing way.

"Savages!" ejaculated Jack, dropping the coins and looking startled.

"Cannibals, by thnuder!" gasped the old salt.

"Fly for your life, messmate."

They dashed for the tree where they had left their rifles, snatched them up and confronted the natives, some of whom had slipped around and cut off their retreat to the boat. Jack and Bill presented their guns, thinking to frighten the fellows off. This action on their part did not intimidate the savages in the least, who continued to draw closer, circling around the tree and hemming the two castaways in.

"We'll have to fight for our lives, shipmate," said Bill, in a compressed tone. "Don't let 'em get any closer or we'll be done for. Those chaps are the cannibal breed, I know 'em and if they capture us we'll be cooked and eaten as sure as beans is beans."

With those words Bill opened fire on the enemy, bowling over an ugly looking native, while Jack followed suit by plugging a second. The savages uttered a chorus of horrible unearthly screeches, and undeterred by the rifle fire, closed in on the old salt and his mate. Crack—crack—crack—crack! Four reports in quick succession, and four more natives fell killed or badly wounded.

The rifle fire seemed to have no effect whatever upon the cannibal crowd. As the savages, in spite of the loss they had sustained, rushed in and attacked the castaways at close quarters, Jack and Bill were obliged to use their weapons as clubs in a desperate effort to hold the natives back. With howls of triumph the enemy struck the rifles aside with their clubs, and two of the savages, rushing in from behind, downed the boy and his companion with well directed blows that knocked them both unconscious on the sand.

CHAPTER IX.—Waiting to Be Roasted.

When Jack and Bill recovered their senses an hour later, they found themselves bound hand and foot with some kind of a tough vegetable fiber

that answered the purpose as well as any rope. They were no longer on the seashore, but in a clearing in the wood, the edge of which was occupied by a score of rude huts.

They lay in the center of the open space by themselves, but they could hear the chattering of men, woman and children natives all around them. The same horrible realization came to the minds of each at the same moment that they were in the power of a cannibal tribe, and that their doom was sealed. Jack rolled over on his right side to get a better view of his surroundings. At the same moment Bill turned over on his left side. The consequence was they came face to face.

"Bill!" ejaculated Jack.

"Jack!" responded the old salt in a melancholy tone.

"We're in a bad fix," said Jack.

"Right you are. It couldn't be wuss."

"You are sure these savages are cannibals?"

"I wish I was as sure of gettin' out of this scrape."

"Do you really think they mean to kill and eat us?"

"That's their outlandish custom."

"Then there isn't much hope for us?"

"Blamed little, I reckon."

"That's fierce. What are they making such a noise about? Are they crowing over the feast they expect to have?"

"They are making a howl over their dead and wounded. Don't you hear the women folk screechin'?"

"Plainly."

"It's a toss up whether they'll kill and eat us first."

"First! What do you mean?"

"After they've howled long enough over the corpses they'll prepare 'em for cookin'."

"What! Their own friends?"

"What's the diff'rence? Everythin' is fish that comes to their net."

"Will the women let them eat their husbands or relatives?"

"Will they? I'll bet they will and take the tenderest pieces themselves."

"My gracious! What a depraved set of human beings!"

"It's the way they've been brought up. The custom of the country."

"Some South American government ought to teach them better things."

"I reckon nobody bothers their heads about these chaps."

"If our government ever learned that we'd been killed and eaten, I should think they'd send a warship down here to teach them a lesson."

"I don't reckon they'll ever hear about the matter. At any rate what happens after we're in the stomachs of them rascals won't do us any good."

"We've had horrible luck since we were set adrift by those six alleged shipwrecked scoundrels."

"Couldn't have been much wuss."

"Too bad they aren't in our shoes."

"No such good luck," growled Bill.

At that juncture two natives approached the prisoners. They picked Jack up in their arms and carried him to a tall stake in front of the largest hut and bound him to it with a piece of vegetable fiber.

They returned to Bill, and fetching him forward, bound him to another post a yard from a Jack.

The rascals then withdrew.

Looking before them Jack and Bill saw a small bunch of women howling around four dead bodies a few yards away.

Evidently they were mourning over the untimely death of their relatives and friends.

The differences in attire of the women and men was not considerable.

The men boasted nothing more than a plain cloth bandage around their loins.

The women were provided with a sort of petticoat, while the children of both sexes were quite naked.

All hands had a superabundance of rusty black hair all over their bodies, something after the way of a monkey.

As the temperature in that southern latitude was cold nearly all the time, it was astonishing how these natives could get along with no more clothes than worn by the natives of the tropics and warm South Seas.

It only went to show that these creatures were little above the order of animals in their manners and customs.

In fact in many respects animals were above them.

While Jack and Bill were wondering what was going to happen next, feeling decidedly uncomfortable over the prospect ahead, a savage, larger and more powerful than the rest of those present, issued from the big hut behind the two posts and walking up to the two prisoners, began feeling of their arms, legs and bodies as if trying to ascertain their physical condition.

He was evidently the head of the tribe, for every one of the natives kept at a respectful distance.

In addition to the cloth around his loins, he sported a wide sash made of red flannel which was knotted over his right hip, and the two ends hung loose down his muscular right leg.

While the rest of the male members of the tribe had thick kinky hair that clung close to their scalps, his hair was long and straight, and made up into a grotesque kind of head-dress that stuck up fully a foot.

Its color was a rusty black like the hair on his body and limbs.

The chief after satisfying himself as to the condition of the two prisoners, left them and walked over to the corpses.

As he approached the women uttered one loud screech, then became silent and retired, leaving the bodies by themselves. The head man then pursued the same tactics with his four dead followers, feeling them all over, and punching their stomachs. When he was through with this performance he gave an order to several of the natives.

They walked up to Jack and Bill and cut them loose from the posts.

"It's all up with us now," almost groaned Jack, for in his mind's eye he saw their brains knocked out and their naked bodies roasting on spits above a hot fire. The thongs about their legs were cut, but their arms were left bound.

The natives, with unintelligible grunts, hustled them out of the enclosure to a vacant hut among the trees. They were thrust inside, then Jack's

left leg was bound to Bill's right one, and they were left alone.

"What does this mean?" asked Jack, who was in a cold perspiration.

"I dunno," replied the old salt, "unless the chief had decided to keep us for another time and have the dead men roasted and eaten first."

"I didn't like the way he felt me, nor the look he gave me during the operation," said Jack with a shudder. "Perhaps he intends to use us for his private consumption, and let the others eat the dead men."

The sailor didn't like his companion's suggestion and made no reply. Through the open door they saw several natives gathering brush as if for fire, and the sight didn't make them feel any more comfortable.

The thick fringe of trees between them and the clearing, as well as two of the huts, prevented them from seeing what was going on in the center of the little village, but the flitting of natives hither and thither, and the sounds of bustle, convinced them that the feast of human flesh was in preparation.

Whether they were to form a part of the horrible banquet was a matter they could not decide upon.

The succeeding minutes were fraught with a terrible uncertainty.

Every sound caused them to start with apprehension, for they expected nothing else than that one or both of them would be presently led forth to their death.

Time passed, however, and no further attention was paid to them.

They could see the ruddy glow of flames spring up, and hear the crackle of the dried fuel.

By and by the odor of burning flesh reached them.

"Ugh! They're cooking something," said Jack, breaking the long painful silence of the past half hour.

"A man must have a poor smeller that couldn't tell that," returned Bill. "I could recognize that odor a mile away."

"And it will be our turn next—to-morrow, maybe."

"It's a satisfaction to know that we can die but once."

"But to die away down here in a savage country, and be eaten afterward, it's too horrible to think of."

Bill didn't reply, and a short silence ensued.

"Say, shipmate," he said at length.

"Well," replied Jack, in a hopeless tone.

"You remember them footprints we saw in the sand of the beach?"

"I've been wonderin' who they belonged to, and what has become of them. Since they came ashore so near this here village, and walked straight into the woods, it strikes me that if they wasn't captured like ourselves, it was little short of a miracle."

"It would seem so. Maybe they're prisoners in one of the huts."

"I dunno. I don't—what's that?"

A scratching sound behind them had attracted the old salt's attention.

"What's the matter?" asked Jack.

"Didn't you hear it?"

"Hear what?"

"That scratchin' at the back of this hut?"

"I didn't notice it. I was thinking of——"

"There it is ag'in. Listen!"

The noise, which seemed to be made in a stealthy manner, was now apparent to Jack.

"What can it be?" he said.

"Sounds like some animals tryin' to get in," replied Bill.

"If an animal wanted to get in there is nothing to prevent him from coming in at the door."

The scratching now became very distinct. It was followed by a tearing sound, as if the dried material of which the hut was formed was being slowly demolished. The noise would stop for a few moments and then be resumed for a brief interval, when it would stop again only to be taken up once more. Suddenly they heard the sound of breathing.

"It is an animal, Bill," cried Jack. "I can hear it breathe."

"Vell, blow me tight, if I ever 'eard the like. Vy, bless yer hignorance, it's only me, Flash Barney, the Plummy Un," cried a voice that both recognized at once with a thrill of mingled surprise and hope.

CHAPTER X.—The Octopus Once More.

"Barney, you here!" cried Jack, in a joyful tone.

"Vell, and vot of it? Hain't you coves glad to see me?" replied the British lad.

"Glad! Dowse my toplights! I could hug you!" replied Bill.

"Could yer? Vell don't think of sich a thing," answered the lad, enlarging the aperture through which he had first looked and then applied his mouth.

"You've come to save us. Good boy," said Jack.

"What's the use of tearin' the hut to pieces to get in here when you kin see a door?" said the sailor, impatiently.

"Vot hignorance! Vy, there's a blackamoor sittin' yonder vith his heye on the 'ut, and if he vos to see me the fat would all be in the fire. Jest yer vait avhile, my coveys, and I'll 'ave yer hout in no time."

"Gracious! To think of Barney turning up to save us," said Jack. "We'll owe him our lives if we get away."

"I wish he'd rush things," growled the old salt, anxiously. "If some of them savages was to come here unexpectedly think what would happen."

"That's right. I'm in a cold sweat again over the bare possibility of such a thing happening," replied Jack.

The ripping and tearing went on faster than ever, but with the same pause, as Barney stopped every minute or two to reconnoiter. At length he had the hole large enough to force his way into the hut. Without a word he snatched Jack's knife from its sheath and slashed his bonds to pieces with a few well directed cuts, after which he turned his attention to Bill, and rendered the same service.

"Out with yer knife, Bill, and make the 'ole larger," he said, kneeling down and cutting away one side himself.

The old salt didn't require a second bidding. In a brief space of time the knives widened the opening so much that the three had no difficulty in creeping through. Jack and Bill found themselves

in the midst of a thick brush at the back of the hut. This brush had screened Barney from the observation of the sentinel whom he pointed out to the escaped prisoners.

"Follow me, coveys, and I'll take yer clear of this bloomin' wood," said the British boy, "and don't yer go for to make any more rumpus than yer can 'elp."

Fifteen minutes later they were a safe distance from the village, and then Jack and Bill breathed more freely than they had done since they recovered their sense and found themselves prisoners in the hands of the cannibals.

"How far is that village from our hut, Barney?" asked Jack.

"Ow far? About a mile."

"How came you to find out that we had been captured?"

"I 'eard the noise of shootin' and vondered vot it all meant. I vaited and vaited for yer to come back, and ven yer didn't I thought I'd go and 'unt yer hup. So horf I started in the direction I 'eard the shots. All to vunce I seen that village, as yer call it, with a lot of blackamoors 'owlin' and a-carryin' on. Vell, strike me cold if I didn't nearly 'ave a fit. I would 'ave runned away quicker than anythink yer know of if I hadn't seen yer two tied hup to poles and a big blackamoor a-punchin' of yer in the ribs and a-pinchin' yer h'arms and legs. 'Crickey,' says I, 'hif they hain't took prisoners.' So I waited around to see vot they vos goin' to do vith yer. Vhen I seen yer stowed away in the 'ut I says to myself, says I, 'Barney, hif yer the Plummy Un as yer've been called yer'll prove it by savin' yer friends,' vich I did or yer wouldn't be 'ere now," concluded the lad.

"You're all right, Barney. You saved our lives and we sha'n't forget the favor, will we, Bill?" said Jack.

"You bet we won't," replied the old salt, heartily. "Tip us your flipper, my lad. You saved us from bein' roasted and ate."

"Roasted and het!" echoed Barney. "Vot do yer mean?"

"I mean them savages are cannibals."

"Vot! Them blackamoors?" gasped the Plummy Un.

The sailor nodded.

"Vell, I'll be blowed. And they vos goin' to heat yer?"

"That was their-intention," said Jack.

"Vell, vot do yer think of that? 'Ow did they catch yer?"

Jack narrated their experiences.

"Then it vos you coveys vot done the shootin'?"

"It was."

"And yer found the guns in the boat?"

"Yes."

"Vell, powder me blue! Vot a time yer 'ad of it."

By this time they had reached their hut.

"As soon as the natives discover our escape they're bound to hunt for us," said Jack. "Sooner or later they'll come here. How are we going to avoid them?"

Bill Bowling scratched his head and looked perplexed.

"Vot's to 'inder us climbin' hup in the trees?" said Barney, as if originating a brilliant idea.

"I'm afraid they'd find us there," returned Jack.

"Hif ve 'ad that boat ve could pull horf from the shore and then they couldn't get us."

"It's too risky to go back along the shore after it. You haven't seen a vessel off shore, I suppose?"

"Vy, I 'avent looked for hany."

"I'll take a look myself," said Jack, starting for the shore edge of the wood.

When he got in full view of the ocean there was nothing in sight in any direction but the limitless expanse of water, shining in the sun.

"The vessel from which that boat must have come off is not off the eastern nor the western coast of this island, that appears to be certain. I judge she's somewhere off the south shore if she's anywhere around here. The question is: dare we venture along the beach on the chance of finding her? Our escape has probably been discovered by now, and the savages are doubtless out looking for us. If they come here we are certain to be discovered, and with only our knives to defend ourselves with we'll stand a poor show against the enemy," thought Jack, as he retraced his steps to the hut. A consultation followed his return, and it was decided that one of them should venture to the south to look for the ship they believed to be off the island, while the other two were to remain at the hut.

"Which of us is to tackle the risky job?" said Jack.

"We'll draw lots," replied Bill. "Here are three twigs of different sizes. Barney will plant them in the earth. You and I will then draw one. If the shortest twig remains in the ground Barney will have to do the scoutin'. Otherwise you or me will do the job."

Barney planted the twigs and Jack drew the shortest one.

"I see it's up to me to get on the job. If I'm caught by the savages I hope you'll do your best to save me," he said.

"We will," answered the old salt.

"Then I'm off," said Jack, after taking a long drink of water and filling up on crackers and preserved meat. He took to the beach and walked south, keeping a sharp lookout for the natives. After going perhaps half a mile he came to a high and projecting point of land. Following this around he suddenly came in sight of a brig anchored close in to the wide mouth of the creek. The vessel looked familiar to him, and on looking sharper at her he saw, to his surprise, that it was the Octopus.

"So the rascals escaped the gale after all and put in here," he muttered. "I am afraid that settles our chances of being taken off at present. It isn't likely that those scoundrels would allow us aboard. I suppose I might as well go back."

As he was about to retrace his steps two men suddenly appeared around the point of land and came to a stop on seeing him. Jack recognized one of them as the ringleader of the six rascals and the other as one of his companions.

"Hello, so it's you, is it?" said the ringleader, whose name was Williams, recognizing him.

"Yes," replied Jack, coolly.

"I thought you and the other chap were at the bottom of the sea. How in thunder did you manage to weather the gale in that boat?"

"We didn't."

"You didn't! Then how is it you are ashore here?"

"We picked up a floating derelict, and she she brought us here."

"A floatin' derelict, eh? Where is she?"

"On the rocks half a mile from here, a total loss."

"You were lucky. So you and your pal escaped after all?"

"We did."

"Well, I reckon you've only run into a hornets' nest," said Williams, with a wicked grin.

"What do you mean by a hornets' nest?" asked Jack, suspecting, however, that the rascal referred to the cannibals.

"Never mind what I mean. You'll find out and I wish you joy of the discovery."

"What are you going to do with the brig?"

"What is that to you?"

"I don't suppose it's anything to me as matters stand."

"Then don't be so blamed curious."

As he spoke a chorus of yells split the air and a crowd of the cannibals burst from the trees a short distance away and charged down on them, waving their clubs menacingly.

"To the boat!" roared Williams, taking to his heels.

His companion followed. Jack, seeing that his only chance was to follow them, did so. The three, one after the other, rushed around the point with the savages in full chase. A boat was tied close to the shore. Williams and his companion dashed for it. Casting loose the painter, they tumbled in, got out their oars and pulled off, giving Jack the laugh. The boy kept on up the creek, disappearing behind a thick mass of shrubbery just as the pursuing cannibals came in sight. They rushed down to the water's edge and shook their clubs at the boat. Williams drew a revolver from his pocket and fired at them. One of the savages dropped wounded on the shore.

The others set up howls of rage and some of them rushed into the water up to their waists. In the meantime Jack kept on his way and left the natives well behind. Reaching the head of the creek he turned to the west and moved back to the shore again, keeping under cover as a matter of prudence.

He saw the boat reach the brig and Williams and his associate mount to her deck. He watched the vessel for awhile, but no attempt was made to set sail. Continuing on his way he came at length to the spot where he and Bill were taken prisoners.

The boat was gone, and so were the two rifles they had found in her and used against the cannibals. As he looked around he thought of the gold pieces he had picked out of the sand. Making his way to the spot he saw about fifty of them, all English sovereigns, lying around loose.

He picked them up eagerly and dropped them in his pocket, then as he disturbed the sand more he saw that there was a whole case of them

CHAPTER XI.—The Steam Yacht.

The two scoundrels seeing only one person, and that a boy, advanced again, and Jack, perceiving that he could not very well avoid an encounter with them awaited their approach.

buried at that spot, the top of it being almost level with the sand.

"There must be a fortune here," he muttered. "But what use is it to us since we have no means of carrying it away?"

Taking the bearings of it for future use he recovered the box and continued on his way around the island.

He kept to the beach where the walking was easier than among the brush.

After half an hour's walk he reached the northern end of the island, and to his surprise and joy he saw a small ocean-going yacht just casting her anchor close in shore.

He rushed down to the water's edge and shouted with all his might.

He was heard and seen, and presently a boat put off from the vessel and came toward the beach.

"Hello!" cried the steersman. "Who are you and what were you signalling the yacht for? Want to be taken off the island?"

"Yes, and I've got two companions who want to get away, too," replied Jack.

"How came you to be here?"

"The schooner we were on came ashore in the late gale."

"Where are your companions?"

"Near a creek on the east side of the island."

"I'll take you aboard and you can state your case to the owner. He won't refuse to take your friends off."

"What brings your craft so far south?" asked Jack, as he stepped into the boat.

"We are bound for the Pacific through the Strait."

"Who is the owner of the yacht?"

"William Ashley."

"Where do you hail from?"

"New York. What's your name, and where do you hail from yourself?"

"My name is Jack Stedfast, and I belong to the village of Montgomery, New York State."

"You are a sailor, I see?"

"Yes, I'm an ordinary seaman. I shipped aboard the brig Octopus for a trip to San Francisco and back to benefit my health, which was rather on the slump, not because I wanted to adopt a seafaring life."

"Indeed. Then you are a sailor only through circumstances?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Well, here we are. Jump aboard and I will present you to the owner, who I see is on the quarter deck with his daughter and the sailing-master."

Jack saw that he was an object of some curiosity to those on board, but that was to be looked for under the circumstances.

The steersman of the boat took him aft and introduced him to the owner, a fine-looking gentleman, with iron-gray hair and moustache.

"Well, young man, I shall be glad to learn how you came to be on that island," said Mr. Ashley. "We hardly expected to find a white man here."

"Well, sir, myself and companions were blown ashore during the late gale."

"You have companions then?"

"Yes, sir; a middle-aged sailor and an English lad of about fifteen."

"You seem to be an American?"

"I am and so is my mate, Bill Bowling."

"Well, let me hear your story."

"If you've no objection I'll begin at the beginning and tell you how I came to go to sea," said Jack, with an admiring glance at the owner's daughter, who was an extremely pretty girl.

"Do so," replied Mr. Ashley.

Accordingly Jack explained how illness had prevented him from taking up the study of civil engineering, which he intended to follow as his life's vocation, and how the doctor had advised him to take a long ocean voyage. He then went on to tell how he had shipped aboard the brig Octopus, signing for the round trip to San Francisco and back, and touched upon his first experience of sea life. He said everything went on all right as a whole until about a week since when they picked up a battered longboat with six sailors in her who represented themselves as shipwrecked mariners. Up to this point there had been nothing particularly striking about Jack's narrative, but his auditors had listened to him with great attention.

When he described the capture of the brig and the setting adrift of her officers and crew in the two boats, Mr. Ashley, his daughter and the sailing-master of the steam yacht heard him with astonished interest. But that was nothing to the excitement they manifested when Jack narrated the boarding of the derelict schooner by himself and his companion, and the scene of horror they had discovered in her cabin.

They were still more astonished to learn that the six alleged shipwrecked sailors belonged to the schooner, and that they had murdered the officers and passengers, and then took to the long boat, leaving the boy Barney behind, the only living being on board the floating morgue.

Jack then told about the gale, and how it had carried them ashore on the island four days since. He concluded by describing the capture of himself and Bill by the savages, horrifying the girl by his narration of their cannibalistic customs.

"If Barney hadn't fortunately come to our rescue we would most certainly have been killed and eaten," he concluded.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Ashley. "This is a most astonishing story you have told us, young man. It sounds like a romance from a book or the magazines."

"It's the truth, sir. And now, as my companions are in danger from the cannibals, I hope you will send a boat around to the eastern shore and take them off with as little delay as possible, since there is no telling when those rascals may discover their whereabouts. I will go in the boat and guide you to the right place."

"I will certainly do so. You'd better take charge of the expedition, Mr. Camp," said the owner turning to the sailing-master. "Take the rifles and revolvers in the cabin with you and a supply of ammunition. It is not unlikely you may need them."

The boat in which Jack had been brought aboard was still floating alongside.

The four sailors constituting the crew were summoned to take part in the job.

Two rifles and four revolvers were brought on deck with a quantity of cartridges adapted to them.

The revolvers were distributed among the sail-

ors, while Jack and the sailing-master took the rifles.

The sailors were soon in possession of the facts concerning the character of the natives of the island, and they were much excited over the possibility of a brush with them. When all was ready the boat shoved off from the yacht and under Jack's guidance started for the eastern side of the island.

CHAPTER XII.—A Fight With the Cannibals.

On the way ashore, Jack learned from the sailing-master that the yacht had put in at the island to try and obtain a supply of fresh water, as the water tank aboard had in some way sprung a leak, and most of their supply had escaped before they discovered their loss.

He found out that the name of the yacht was the *Electra*, and that the owner and his daughter were on a pleasure trip around the world, via Australia, India, the Mediterranean ports and England.

The sailing-master said that they were short-handed, as two of the crew had deserted at Montevideo, in Buenos Ayres, and he did not doubt that if Jack and Bill Bowling were willing to take their places that the owner would accept them, together with Master Barney.

He said the pay was much better than that usually allowed merchant sailors, and that they would be well fed and have a comparatively easy time of it.

Jack said he would be glad of the chance to see something more of the world than he had expected when he left New York on the brig, and he had no doubt that Bill Bowling would like a berth on board the yacht first rate.

In a few minutes the mouth of the creek beside the wood came in sight and Jack said:

"Pull into the creek. We'll land there. It is but a few yards to the hut where I left my companions to await my return."

The boat was beached at a convenient spot.

"I'll go to the hut and fetch my friends back with me," said Jack. "While I am gone be on your guard against the natives who, for all I know, may be in this vicinity."

Jack hastened into the wood and made his way to the hut as fast as possible.

He found Bill and Barney keeping watch in the clearing where the shack stood.

They welcomed him with every evidence of satisfaction, for he had been away longer than they looked for, and were beginning to fear that he had fallen into the hands of the cannibals again.

"I see you haven't been disturbed by the savages, Bill," said Jack.

"No shipmate, but we've been on pins and needles ever since you left for fear they'd be down on us. You and me have had a specimen of the way they can fight, and I'm bound to say I've no wish for another run-in with them. I never saw such fearless chaps in the face of sure death. They'd make great soldiers if they were civilized. They'd go right up to the cannon's mouth without the least hesitation."

"Vell, my covey, vot's in the vind—anythink?" asked Barney.

"Yes, I've got good news for you," replied Jack.

"Good news, eh?" said Bill. "You found the ship then?"

"I did. And you couldn't guess what vessel it is."

"I reckon I'm not good at guessin' riddles."

"Our brig, the *Octopus*, is anchored off the south shore."

"The deuce you say!" ejaculated the astonished sailor.

"And I came face to face with two of those scamps who happened to be ashore."

"Did they recognize you?"

"I should say they did—right off the reel."

"What did they have to say?"

"Not a wole lot, but enough to let me understand that we had no show of being taken off the island by them."

"Then where does your good news come in?"

"I'll tell you in a moment. As I was talking to those fellows a crowd of the cannibals sprang out of the wood near by and chased us into a creek where the two rascals had a small boat handy to escape in."

"They got off, I suppose?"

"They did."

"And how about yourself?"

"I got safe away in the confusion, and started off along the beach toward the north shore to re-join you that way."

"That's why you were so long away."

"That's one reason. The other is I was aboard a steam yacht."

"You were what?" exclaimed Bill, in astonishment.

"Aboard a small steam yacht that's anchored off the north shore."

"You don't mean it!"

"I do," and Jack narrated how he had seen the yacht coming to anchor, had hailed her and been taken aboard where he had told the story of their recent adventures. "I came here in the yacht's boat which lies in the creek. The owner sent her to bring you and Barney off."

"Glory hallelujah!" roared Bill, cutting a rough caper on the ground. "Lead the way. We can't reach her any too soon to suit me."

"Come on, then. The cannibals do not appear to be in this neighborhood, so I guess we've got a clear road before us. It's only a few steps to the creek anyway," said Jack.

The three immediately left the hut and in a few minutes came in sight of the boat, lying within easy reach of the beach. They broke into a run and were soon down at the water's edge where the boat had put in to meet them. Jack introduced Bill and Barney to the sailing-master of the *Electra*, and the officer gave orders to pull for the yacht, which was half a mile away around a small promontory. Just as the sailors dipped their oars in the water the ringing sound of a little brass cannon reached their ears.

"What can that mean?" cried Mr. Camp. "It must be a recall. The yacht perhaps is threatened with some danger. Maybe attacked by the cannibals you spoke of. That would be a serious matter with only the owner and the cook aboard to defend her and Miss Ashley. Give way, my men; give way! Pull with a will."

The idea that the yacht might have been attacked by the savages excited everybody in the boat. The four sailors bent to their work like

good fellows, sending the boat spinning along toward the promontory. Again came the ringing sound of the small brass cannon, which the sailing-master said was stationed at the bow of the yacht, and intended only for salutes.

"There's something wrong, that's sure," said Mr. Camp. "Pull, my hearties, pull!"

In a few minutes the boat swung around the point in full sight of the yacht. Then the worst fears of those in the boat were realized. The yacht was surrounded by several long canoes while her deck was swarming with cannibals.

"Oh, crickey!" exclaimed Barney. "Jest look at them blackamoors. If we gets hout of this alive we'll be precious lucky."

"Pull, men, pull!" roared the sailing-master. "The owner and his daughter will be murdered unless we can beat off those chaps."

He picked up his rifle as he spoke while Jack cocked his.

"These are magazine guns," said Mr. Camp. "Pick those rascals off the deck as fast as you can, but don't fire unless you feel sure of hitting your man, for we can't afford to waste any of our ammunition."

Jack took aim at a native on the bows and fired. The cannibal threw up his hands and pitched into the water. The sailing-master's rifle spoke immediately after, and another savage got his quietus. Crack! went Jack's rifle again, but he missed his mark.

"Lord love you!" cried Bill, "if I only had a club how I would sail into them chaps."

"So would I if I 'ad somethink to lay around me with," said MBarney, who seemed to be as full of fight as any one in the boat.

The cannibals shook their clubs at the approaching boat, and appeared to stand in no fear of the rifle fire that was thinning their ranks. Crack! Crack! Mr. Camp and Jack fired almost together, and two more natives sank on the deck. At that moment a shrill scream echoed through the air. One of the savages came on deck with the struggling Edith Ashley in his arms.

The boat shot alongside the yacht. Jack, with reckless disregard for his own safety, was the first to spring on deck in the face of half a dozen clubs in the hands of stalwart natives. He dodged the blows and swung the butt of his rifle at the head of the nearest cannibal. The savage warded off the blow cleverly with his club, but before he could attack the boy in turn the boat's crew, led by Mr. Camp, closely followed by Bowling, came scrambling on deck. Amid a fusillade of pistol shots the fight waxed hot, with the natives getting the worst of it. Jack worked his way aft to where he saw Edith Ashley in the arms of her captor. But he had to fight at every step with the savages who opposed his progress. Once they downed him and would have pounced upon him, but Barney dashed forward with a club he had picked up and saved him. Bill Bowling was cutting terrible havoc in the savage ranks with one of their own clubs, which he swung right and left with all the power of his muscular arms. Fifteen or more of the cannibals were already dead or wounded on the deck, while two of the sailors had been so badly hurt that they had to give up. With a shout Jack threw himself on the savage holding the girl just as he was getting into one of the canoes with two companions. The cannibal slipped out of his

grasp and reached the boat. Jack took aim at him with his rifle and the next moment that native would have had a bullet in his brain, but a savage came up behind him and struck him with his club on the head. The boy pitched forward and fell into the water, his rifle going to the bottom. Before he sank one of the cannibals in the boat seized him by the hair and pulled his head out of the sea. The canoe was headed at once for the shore with the unconscious girl in the arms of her captor, and Jack being towed along astern.

CHAPTER XIII.—Surrounded By Peril.

Neither Mr. Camp nor the rest of his forces, Barney excepted, saw the fate that had overtaken Jack in his gallant attempt to save the yacht owner's daughter, nor noted the departure of the canoe for the shore. They had their hands full clearing the deck of the invaders, who were fighting to the last ditch. Barney, intent on rescuing Jack, to whom he had taken a great fancy, slid down into an empty canoe, and with the dead body of a native before him as a blind, paddled shoreward, but not directly after the other craft. The first canoe quickly landed and the natives hurried into the woods with their two prisoners. A few minutes afterward Barney landed and hastened after them. Two other canoes came ashore with a mere handful of cannibals, who had lost more than half their party in the fight. The sailing-master, now that the victory had been won, hastened to look up the owner and his daughter. Mr. Ashley was found stretched unconscious on the floor of the elegant little cabin, bleeding freely from a nasty wound on his head inflicted by a club. The cook was also discovered stretched out to all appearances dead. After the yacht had been boarded by the savages the owner and the cook had retreated to the cabin to protect Edith until help came. They had been unsuccessful, and but for the arrival of the boat with Mr. Camp, the crew and the three castaways would have been carried off with the girl. The sailing-master, after placing the owner in his berth, looked around for Edith, but failed to find to find any trace of her of course.

"Good lord!" he exclaimed, "she must have been carried ashore by those savages."

"Where is Jack and Barney?" asked Bill, coming upon him.

"I couldn't tell you. Aren't they around somewhere?"

"No. They hain't on the yacht."

"Neither is Miss Ashley."

"What's happened to her?"

"She's either been carried ashore by those villains, or she fell over board in the confusion and was drowned. What will Mr. Ashley say when he regains his senses? He'll be crazy. Something has got to be done."

"We'd better chase those savages to their village and see if they have the girl," said the old salt. "They may have carried off Jack and Barney, too."

"Some of us will have to remain on the vessel. We can't leave her alone."

"Some of us? Why, there's only one of your hands beside the engineer and fireman, able to stand. I'll have to go alone. I'll take a rifle and a revolver and do the best I can."

Leaving the sailing-master in a state of mental confusion Bill rushed on deck and securing Mr. Camp's rifle and a loaded revolver, he stepped into one of the canoes abandoned by the natives and paddled ashore as fast as he could. In the meantime the party of four natives who had captured Edith Ashley and Jack Stedfast proceeded toward the village. Two of them carried the girl between them while the other two dragged the unconscious boy unceremoniously through the woods by the arms, letting his legs drag at will. It was perhaps the rough way in which he was handled that brought Jack to his senses quicker than otherwise. The party were half way through the woods when Jack's feet caught in some creepers and he was pulled out of the grasp of the natives. They stopped to pick him up again while the rest of the of the party went on. Finding the boy's leg caught one of them let go of his arm and stopped to release him. Hardly had he accomplished this than Jack shook himself free from the other and faced them. Neither had his club with him, so they made a jump at the boy to catch him. He eluded them and dashed away among the trees. At that moment Edith recovered her senses, and finding herself in the power of two ugly looking savages, in the midst of the woods, uttered a succession of screams. Jack heard her cries and, disregarding his own danger, he darted in the direction whence the sounds had come. He soon saw the two natives dragging the struggling girl along. Rushing right upon them he dealt one a blow in the jaw with all his force, stretching him half stunned on the ground. Then he attacked the other with his sheath knife, forcing him to release the girl and take to his heels uttering loud guttural cries.

"Come with me, Miss Ashley," said Jack. "I'll save you."

"Save me, oh, save me!" she cried.

"That's what I mean to do if I can," he said.

As he started to lead her away they were confronted by Jack's two pursuers, who sprang upon him and bore him to the ground. While one placed his weight on his legs the other tried to get at the boy's neck to strangle him. Jack put up a desperate but unavailing struggle against them. He was succumbing to superior force when out of the bushes darted Barney. He had one of the native clubs in his hands, and he brought it crashing down on the head of one of the cannibals.

"Ow do yer like that, my covey?" cried the British boy, as the savage fell like a log.

He was about to repeat the performance on the other when the fellow released Jack and sprang on him, tearing the club out of his hands. It would have fared badly with Barney only that Jack jumped up and went to his aid. The savage proved a hard nut to manage, but they bowled him over at last, and not a minute too soon, for as Jack seized Edith by the arm the second crowd of retreating cannibals appeared on the scene.

"We must fly for our lives, Barney," said Jack, pulling the girl along through the woods.

The cannibals being used to the woods and good runners overhauled the three fugitives hand over hand. Jack saw that they would be taken in spite of anything they could do.

"We'll have to stop and make the best fight we can," he said to Barney.

"Oh, crickey! And ve hain't got never a club to crack their 'eads vith."

As he spoke the ground gave way suddenly beneath their feet and the three were precipitated into a deep hole.

"Oh!" fluttered the girl. "Where are we?"

"We've fallen into some hole. Hush! There's the savages above looking down. They can't reach us unless they jump down, too, and I don't believe they'll do that," he whispered.

Looking up he could see the cannibals plainly, but they could not see their prey below.

For fifteen minutes they hung about the mouth of the hole, and then withdrew, but whether they had left the spot, or had drawn back to watch the hole from an ambush, Jack could not say.

Fumbling in his pocket he brought out a match which he struck.

Right ahead of them appeared a low tunnel that seemed to have been made by the hand of Nature.

"We must follow this and see where it will lead us to," said Jack, "for it isn't possible for us to climb up that hole to the surface."

"Oh, dear, must we go that way?" faltered Edith, who trembled at the idea of penetrating, as it were, the bowels of the earth.

"You and Barney can remain here while I go ahead and investigate if you are afraid to go with me."

The girl hesitated and then said she would rather go with him than to remain behind.

"Then come on," said Jack,

"If the earth gives way we'll be buried alive," faltered the girl as they started.

"Better even that than to fall into the hands of those cannibals," said Jack. "But don't think of the worst side of the case. Keep up your courage. I believe we'll come out of this all right."

His encouraging words buoyed her up and she followed him in silence.

The tunnel was so small that they had to get on their hands and work forward that way, Jack in the lead, Edith next, and Barney bringing up the rear.

The tunnel seemed an endless one to the three fugitives, though as a matter of fact it was not long and the end of it was reached unexpectedly when Jack pushed his way through a mass of bushes and saw before him the creek where Williams and his companions had taken to their boat that afternoon to escape the savages.

"Hurrah!" he shouted back over his shoulder. "I've reached the open air at last."

He pushed his way out, and turning reached in his hand to help Edith from the tunnel.

In a moment or two she stood beside him, thankful to have escaped from that awful underground passage. Barney presently appeared and joined them.

"Vell strike me cold hif ve hain't all right vunce more. Vot a blessin' the fresh hair is vhen vun 'as been through sich a 'ole as that! Vhy, if ve hain't come hout close to the hoocean may I never see Radcliff 'Ighvay ag'in."

"I know just where we are," said Jack, cheerfully.

"Vot a heye yer must 'ave. Blow me if yer hain't a vonder."

"This is the creek where I escaped from the cannibals this afternoon."

"Vell, vot do yer think of that?"

"And the Octopus is anchored out yonder if she hasn't slipped her anchor and sailed away."

Jack pointed in the direction where he had last seen the vessel, but there was no sign of her now in the gathering darkness.

"How far are we from the yacht?" asked Edith, looking anxiously in Jack's face. "I am so distressed about my father. He and the cook were knocked down on the floor while defending me against the natives when they rushed into the cabin. I'm so worried lest my father was seriously hurt or even killed," and the girl's pent-up feelings gave way to a fit of weeping.

Jack felt sorry for her and tried to comfort her as best he could.

He could form no conjecture as to how her father had come out of the scrimmage, for he had not been in the cabin.

As he put his arm gently around the fair girl and led her around the shore of the creek, his intention being to regain the yacht by way of the western shore, the course he had himself followed that afternoon after escaping from the pursuing cannibals, he asked Barney how it came about that he was ashore.

The British lad explained how he had seen Jack knocked into the water by the club of one of the savages, the native springing into the canoe immediately afterward, while one of his companions caught the young sailor by the hair.

Seeing the boat put for the shore with the two prisoners, he made up his mind to follow and rescue them if possible. Reaching the beach he had followed the party to the point where the struggle took place that, with his help, resulted in the escape of Jack and Edith.

"This is the second time to-day you've done me a good turn, Barney, and you may be sure I am very grateful to you," replied Jack.

"Vot of it? Yer don't s'pose I vos goin' to let them blackamoors make bakalo of yer hif I could help it. When I takes a fancy to a cove I sticks to 'im through thick and thin, blow me tight hif I don't."

At that moment the report of a rifle and two or three revolver shots rang out clear and distinct on the night air.

CHAPTER XIV.—Back to the Yacht.

"A party from the yacht has come ashore hunting for you, Miss Ashley," said Jack. "Barney, if you aren't afraid to take a chance, you might connect with them and let them know that I have Miss Ashley in charge and am leading her around to the north shore by way of the western beach," added the young sailor as two more shots broke the silence in quick succession.

"All right, my covey. I'll do it," replied the British boy, who immediately left them and vanished into the bushes.

Jack and Edith then hurried on their way.

"What a terrible day this has been for us all," said the girl, clinging to Jack's arm.

"Yes, it's been rather strenuous," he replied. "This morning Bill Bowling and myself thought our last hour had come."

He went into all the particulars of their experience in the cannibal village, and Edith shuddered at his recital.

"My poor father," she sobbed. "Shall I find him alive when we reach the yacht?"

"Oh, I guess so," answered Jack cheerfully. "You say he was knocked out by a club? In fact that is the only weapon the natives appear to have."

"Yes."

"Unless the blow fractured his skull, which let us hope it didn't, I dare say he has come around by this time. Look at me. I was knocked senseless twice to-day by one of those clubs, and yet I feel all right, and my mate Bill was bowled over once by the same weapon. A man's head was evidently built to stand some tough knocks."

During their conversation they heard several more shots in the direction of the cannibal village.

A period of silence then ensued. This was suddenly broken by a fresh fusillade of distant pistol shots, mingled with the ringing crack of a single rifle.

"There's quite a scrap going on back there," said Jack. "I'm thinking there won't be many left of that tribe. They ought to be wiped out, for their practices are horrible. Cannibalism is a thing that should be put an end to root and branch. Once the islands of the South Pacific were full of savages who followed the custom, but it has been about exterminated there now."

At that moment the lights of the yacht came in sight.

"There's your vessel yonder, Miss Ashley," said Jack.

"I dare say I shall be able to find a canoe to take you out to her; if not I'll row you out in the boat that brought the search party, whose shots we heard, ashore."

He hurried his fair companion along the water's edge till he spied a dark blot close to the beach.

It proved to be a canoe with two paddles in it.

"Step in, Miss Ashley. I'll put you on the yacht in a few moments," said Jack, helping her into the little craft.

Seizing one of the paddles he pushed away from the beach. In less than five minutes he drew close to the side of the yacht. A man, indistinct in the gloom, stood by the quarter deck rail.

"Boat ahoy!" he cried, in eager tones.

"My father's voice," exclaimed Edith, with a thrill of joy and relief. "Father—father!" she cried out.

"Edith—my child—thank Heaven!" said the man, rushing to the gangway in the waist of the little vessel. A moment later Jack passed her up the low side of the yacht, and she sprang into her father's arms.

"Father, dear, dear father; you are not badly hurt, are you?" she asked.

"No, I'm all right except for a splitting headache," he replied.

"I've been so worried about you."

"Have you? But think how worried I've been about you. Ah, young man," turning to Jack, "I thank you for bringing my dear child aboard. I suppose you've been in trouble, too, for you and that young English lad were reported as missing after the natives retreated."

"Yes, sir, the cannibals carried your daughter and me ashore together."

"Father, it was this young man who saved me from the savages while they were taking me to their village," said Edith, with a look of gratitude at Jack.

"Indeed? How did you accomplish that feat when you say you, too, were a prisoner in their hands?" asked the owner of the yacht.

Jack explained how he had got away from the two cannibals who had him in charge, and then hearing his daughter's screams had gone at once to her rescue. In telling what followed he gave much of the credit of their ultimate safety to Barney.

"If we hadn't turned up in the nick of time your daughter and I would have been retaken and carried to the village. In fact I was as good as captured when he pitched in and saved me."

Jack then described their flight from the pursuing natives, and how they had escaped them by falling into a hole in the ground that connected with an underground water course through which they had made their way to safety. Hardly had he concluded when a pistol shot sounded on the water. Looking in the direction of the shot they saw the dark outline of the yacht's boat coming toward the vessel. In a few moments she was alongside, and Jack saw there were six persons in her. They were the sailing-master, one seaman, the engineer and fireman whom Mr. Ashley had sent ashore to rescue his daughter, and Bill Bowling and Barney. Bill, after reaching the shore, had gone straight to the cannibal village to reconnoiter the place and try and get a line on Jack, Barney and Miss Ashley, whom he believed the natives had captured. While moving around cautiously in the woods he had witnessed the return of the party which had chased and failed to capture the young people. After watching the village for nearly an hour he saw the yacht's rescue party approaching the scene and joined them to the great satisfaction of Mr. Camp, who felt that his party was a small one to accomplish the job they were on. While investigating the village their presence was discovered and the savages rushed to attack them. They opened fire, and those were the first shots heard by the young people on the shore. The fighting was carried on under great difficulties in the darkness, the rescue party being afraid to fire often for fear of killing one of their own people. During the scrap Barney joined them, and passed them the satisfactory news that Jack and Miss Ashley were not prisoners, but making their way around to the yacht by the western shore. Mr. Camp then ordered a retreat, which they made with success in the gloom of the wood, and they regained their boat without any serious casualties. After Mr. Ashley had heard the story of the rescue party, he asked Mr. Camp if he didn't think it was the part of prudence to get up steam, hoist the anchor and give up their purpose of getting fresh water at that island.

"This island offers special facilities for getting water, and by keeping out armed scouts I should think the risk of further trouble with the natives would be greatly reduced," replied Mr. Camp.

"At any rate I shall heave up the anchor and run further off shore for the night," said the owner.

CHAPTER XV.—The Treasure of the Land of Fire.

Jack, Bill and Barney went forward with the engineer, fireman and the one sailor who had escaped injury during the battle with the natives,

without learning that the owner had decided to leave his anchorage and move off shore. The cook had been revived, and after a couple of hours' rest was beginning to attend to his customary work. As soon as the rescue party got back he began preparing a hasty supper for all hands. The engineer, fireman and the sailors had a small dining-room forward for their own special use. This was situated between the galley and the small forecabin where the sailors slept. The engineer and fireman had a plainly furnished state room to themselves on the starboard side of the galley, while the cook had one allotted to his use on the port side. The three wounded sailors were in their bunks when Jack and Bill Bowling were taken into the forecabin and shown the bunks at their disposal. As for Barney it was arranged that he was to occupy a shake-down in the pantry for the night. Half an hour later all hands were called to supper, the wounded men excepted. After supper the engineer was instructed to get up steam enough to take the yacht a quarter of a mile further off shore. When Jack saw that preparations were being made to leave their present anchorage he thought the owner intended to leave the island for good. With the knowledge of that chest of golden sovereigns in the sand of the south shore he got quite excited at the prospect of losing it. So he went aft to Mr. Camp, who was pacing the quarter deck, and told him he'd like to speak to Mr. Ashley on a matter of great importance.

"Mr. Ashley is at supper with his daughter at present. I dare say he'll see you though, as he's under great obligations to you. Go right down the companion and knock on the after cabin door."

So Jack went down and knocked as directed.

"Come in," called Mr. Ashley. Jack entered and bowed to the owner and Edith.

"I suppose you want to see me, young man?" said the nabob.

"Yes, sir, if you will spare me a few minutes of your time. Pardon me, for disturbing you at your supper."

"Don't mention it. What can I do for you?"

Jack thereupon told him about the discovery he had made of a chest of gold coin buried on the southwest shore of the island. Mr. Ashley and Edith listened in great astonishment.

"A chest of gold coin, you say?" said the yacht owner.

"Yes, sir. I want to get it aboard, for its possession would mean a whole lot to me, as well as my two companions, to whom I intend to give a portion of it if you will help me secure it. I am willing to share with you, sir, too, in return for your assistance in the matter."

"This certainly caps the climax of your adventures on that island, Stedfast," said Mr. Ashley. "I congratulate you on the discovery and promise you I will take it aboard for you. As for sharing any of it with me, I could not think of such a thing after what you have done for my daughter and myself. My dear girl may owe her life to you for all any one can tell. I will make it my business to get the box of treasure aboard to-morrow, if possible, if it can be done without too much risk, and I will take charge of it in your interest?"

"Thank you, sir. I hastened to speak about the matter, for I heard the sailing-master tell the

engineer to get up steam, and I thought you meant to leave the island right away."

"We're going a bit further off shore for the night, as a matter of precaution. I doubt if the natives will make another attack on us, but it's best to be on the safe side."

"I think you're right, sir," replied Jack, bowing himself out of the cabin.

Jack, Bill and Barney put in a good night's rest and tumbled out on deck next morning soon after sunrise. All hands had breakfast at seven, and then the yacht steamed inshore to her former anchorage, where preparations were made to take the much needed water aboard.

When all was ready the boat, under command of Mr. Camp, towed a water cask to the beach.

Jack, Barney and the sailing-master, well armed, went ahead, while Bill, another sailor and the cook rolled the barrel after them.

In this order the party reached the small lake.

Leaving the men with the barrel to fill it, Mr. Camp, Jack and Barney went forward a short distance, and stood watch at a certain distance apart.

When the barrel was filled it was rolled down to the boat and taken aboard.

The water was run into the tank, after which the men carried the barrel back to the lake.

This work was carried on till about noon, when the tank was nearly full. After dinner, which was served between one and two on this occasion, Mr. Ashley, after a consultation with Mr. Camp, ordered the yacht to be brought around to a point off the southwest shore indicated by Jack Stedfast. This was done and she came to anchor. The boat was sent ashore with all hands armed as before and provided with a spade and an empty canned goods box.

Jack led the party to the place where the chest of gold lay buried.

Brushing the upper covering of sand aside he exposed the treasure to the astonished gaze of those present.

Jack, Bill and Barney stood guard while the box was dug up and a portion of its contents transferred to the canned goods box.

Both boxes were then carried to the boat and all hands then re-embarked for the yacht. The two boxes of English sovereigns were then carried into the cabin and turned over to Mr. Ashley.

In the presence of Jack and his daughter he counted the money and it footed up £50,000, equivalent to nearly a quarter of a million in American current coin.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Stedfast, on having acquired a fortune in a most unusual way," said Mr. Ashley.

"Thank you, sir; and it is very kind of you to assist me in getting possession of it," said Jack.

"Not at all. I would do much more for you in recognition of your services to my daughter. Now that you are so well provided for I suppose I can hardly expect you to ship with me any further than our first port. Sidney, Australia."

"The money won't make any difference with me. I shall be glad to continue aboard until you return to New York."

"Very well. I shall be glad to have you; but I think after the three men who were wounded return to their duty I will make you second officer,

and have you berth in the cabin with Mr. Camp and ourselves."

That arrangement was carried into effect a week later, and Jack was transferred from the fore-castle to the cabin, where he had every opportunity to get acquainted with Edith.

In due time the yacht reached Sydney. The yacht took in various ports enroute to Calcutta, where she stopped for a week.

Thence they steamed for the city of Bombay, on the western side of the Indian peninsula, stopping enroute at Colombo, Ceylon.

From Bombay they went across the Arabian Sea to the Gulf of Aden, and up the Red Sea to Cairo.

Leaving that point, after a visit to the Holy Land by Mr. Ashley, his daughter and Jack, the yacht entered the Mediterranean, stopped at different places, during which the owner, Edith and Jack spent a week at Rome, and finally reached Gibraltar.

Thence the yacht proceeded to London.

During the long trip Jack had had many talks with Barney, with a view of mending that lad's crooked ways.

On his solemn promise to reform and become a worthy lad, Jack said he would take him to New York and deposit the sum of \$25,000 to his credit in some trust company.

After a month spent in the English capital and cruising about the British isles the Electra returned to New York. The day after her arrival Jack presented Bill Bowling with a certificate of deposit on a trust company for \$25,000 and the old salt declared he was now well fixed for life and would give up the sea for good.

After taking leave of Mr. Ashley and Edith, between whom and himself there now existed a strong bond of attachment, Jack started for his native village where he was, of course, received with open arms by his mother and sister. Jack, now strong and robust, took up civil engineering, and eventually became an expert, but with that this story has nothing to do.

He is now a man of middle age, wealthy and one of the foremost men in his profession, but he always blesses that unlucky combination of misfortunes, for he says it provided him with the most charming little wife in the world, whom he met as Edith Ashley when captured by the Cannibals in the land of fire.

Next week issue will contain "THE LITTLE OPERATOR: OR, CORNERING THE 'BEARS' OF WALL STREET."

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or

The Boy Firemen of Fairdale

By Gaston Garne

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Dastardly Deed.

Dugdale had taken a swift glance about before seizing Nellie's wrists. He had not seen Will Norton in the shadows. He believed himself unobserved.

But the next moment, and just as Nellie's scream rose upon the evening air, something struck him behind the ear, and he went reeling some yards away.

His head whirled like a top, and it was some moments before he could collect himself. Then as he looked about he saw Will Norton standing angrily before him.

"What do you mean, you young scoundrel!" cried the boy fireman. "Be off before I turn you over to the police."

Nellie Wade, with a little cry of joy and relief, clung to Will's arm. For a moment bitter hate and vengeful fury shone in young Dugdale's eyes.

But he was a coward.

He had not the courage to dispute the point further with Will Norton. He backed away slowly and hurled foul epithets at the young fireman.

"You'll pay for this!" he hissed. "My father will make beggars of you. You'll be glad to come to me and beg mercy of me yet."

Will turned to Nellie and said:

"Were you going to my house, Nellie?"

"Yes," replied the young girl. "Mamma is there and waiting for me. That fellow will not persecute me further if he is wise."

"That is right," declared the young fireman. "I'll break every bone in his body."

"I fairly loathe him!"

"He is certainly a conceited young scamp! But I must tell you that I saw your father today, Nellie."

With this Will told all the incidents of the day. It was a pleasant walk with Nellie Wade upon his arm, and Will was sorry when it was over, and they reached the gate at last.

Mrs. Wade, who spent some hours each day with Mrs. Norton, was waiting for Nellie. They would then have taken their leave, but Mrs. Norton insisted that they should remain to the evening meal.

"Will will accompany you to the hotel," she said.

So, thus pressed, they remained. It was a great pleasure to Will, for every moment spent in the society of Nellie Wade was to him a golden one.

The main topic of conversation, of course, was

the possibility of Mr. Wade's release from prison on bail. The prospect was certainly a joyful one.

"Papa can do much to clear himself of that charge of forgery if he gets out," said Nellie.

"He will certainly do it," said Mrs. Wade, with supreme confidence in her husband. "He always wins against trouble."

It was a pleasant evening that they spent in the humble little cottage. When it came time for them to go Will accompanied them to their quarters at the hotel.

Then the young firemen decided to go down to the engine-house before going back home. So he turned his footsteps thither.

All members of the company carried a key to admit them to the engine-house at night. When Will reached the door he unlocked it and stepped in.

He struck a match and lighted the gas. He walked across the floor and glanced at the engine.

As he did so it struck him forcefully that something was wrong. He drew nearer, and instinctively placed his hand on the powerful and long rope used to draw the engine by hand.

A startling discovery was made. The rope was severed in half a hundred places. A keen knife had severed the strands, and there was no way of drawing the engine to a fire had an alarm been given.

Astounded and horrified, Will Norton now turned his attention to the engine.

He was dumfounded to discover that the pumping valves had been removed. The engine was useless without them.

For a moment the discovery appalled the young fireman, and he felt a cold sweat break out upon him.

What foul plot was afoot now? Who had done this fiendish thing, and what was the motive? Was it possible that some new incendiary scheme was afoot?

For a moment Will felt weak in the knees. He lighted a lantern hastily and then made a search of the engine-house.

The miscreant, whoever he was, had made his escape. But one thing puzzled Will.

How had he made his entrance? The windows were tight. There was no means of ingress other than the door.

That had been locked and only the members of the company had keys. Will could not believe that this was the work of any member of the fire company. He sat down upon a chair and tried to think.

Then as the horror of the thing dawned upon him, and he reflected upon the consequences should an alarm sound at that moment, he sprang up.

New rope must be procured. The engine valve must be replaced. There must be no time lost.

With feverish haste he rushed from the engine-house, closing the door behind him and locking it. He sped to the home of the assistant foreman, Jack Craven.

He aroused Craven quickly and called him out the door.

"Jack!" he whispered excitedly, "I want your help at once. Villainy is afoot. Some scoundrel has cut the ropes and removed the engine valves at the fire-house."

"My soul!" exclaimed Craven. "Whose work can it be?"

"I don't know."

"But I was last to leave the engine-house. Didn't you find the door locked?"

"I did."

"Wait till I get my coat on, Will, and I'll be with you."

It was but a few moments later that the two firemen were on their way back to the engine-house. When they arrived there Will showed Jack what had been done.

Craven was astonished and angry.

"There is only one man could have done this thing," he cried, "and while he is not now a member of this company, he has a key."

"Who is that?" asked Will.

"Young Dugdale. He is just cur enough to do a trick like this."

"Clinton Dugdale!" gasped Will, with sudden conviction. "But we can't prove it, Jack."

"No, more's the pity. But he is the chap, be sure."

"Well," said Will, "we must make repairs as quickly as we can. If an alarm should sound Monarch No. 4 would be out of it."

"That's right," cried Craven. "Fortunately there's a spare valve upstairs which I can find and put in myself. Then we will try and arouse Mr. Foster, the rope walk owner, and get a new rope."

Craven sped upstairs and presently reappeared with the valve. Then with Will's aid he set to work to put it in.

When this task was completed, the next thing was to secure a new rope. Will and Craven now locked up the engine-house and made their way to the residence of Mr. Foster, who owned the rope walk in another part of the town.

It was an hour before the two firemen returned, lugging the heavy rope. They were almost exhausted.

But they wasted no time. Hurriedly they laid out the rope and connected it with the engine.

Then for the first time Will drew a deep breath of relief.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "We have done it, Jack. We've headed off the alarm. If it sounds now, Monarch No. 4 is ready."

The words had hardly escaped Will's lips when the assistant foreman sprang up. The electric annunciator began to buz and turned up the number of the box where the alarm was sounded.

At the same moment the fire-bells pealed out furiously.

"Fire!" cried Will.

Clang! clang! clang!

But Monarch No. 4 was ready.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Burning of the Prison.

Will and Craven had finished their job none too soon. With the first sounding of the alarm Will noted the number on the electric dial.

"Number fourteen!" he cried. "That is the county jail, Jack!"

"Why, that's so!" cried Craven, with a start. "Do you suppose it is the jail itself that is on fire?"

"Oh, I guess not. It is almost fireproof."

By this time the boys of Monarch No. 4 came rushing in. It did not take long to run out the rope and get the engine under way.

Away went the fire company on the mad run. It was fully half a mile to the prison, but it was not many minutes before Monarch No. 4 came in sight of it.

And a great cry went up.

"The jail is on fire!"

This was true. Smoke and flames were seen to be bursting from the lower story of the big prison.

Will Norton knew well that there were half a hundred prisoners locked in their cells in that great stone building. Even if the flames should not reach them, they might meet death from suffocation.

Among them were Clifford and his pals and Mr. Wade. The thought caused Will's nerves to tingle.

Monarch No. 4, in spite of the treacherous plot to prevent it, was one of the first companies at the fire.

Very quickly a line of hose was run out and a stream got upon the flames. Chief Hogan now appeared on the scene, and the hook and ladder truck came up.

Will had been waiting for the latter. He was not yet assured that the prisoners were all out of the building. He said that the turnkeys had appeared with a few of them.

Satisfied that there were others in the building, Will left things in charge of Craven, and then made his way to the rear of the jail.

He found to his surprise that the rear door was wide open. No person was in sight.

"That is queer!" muttered the young fireman. "There is something wrong here."

Without hesitation Will entered and proceeded to make his way through a dark corridor. There was some smoke in it, but he kept on and reached winding stairs.

Without hesitation he sprang up these. In a few moments he was on the landing and in the first gallery or tier of cells.

Smoke was below and rolling up in great volumes to the dome of the building. Will could see that it would be but a very few moments before the cells would be filled with it.

The young fireman made his way rapidly along the gallery. He saw that the cell doors were wide open on that side of the prison.

But he heard a voice on the other side which called:

"Help! Help! Are you going to let a man roast in this infernal trap?"

"Mr. Wade!" shouted Will. "I am here! I will save you!"

Will traversed the bridge to the opposite gallery with a few bounds. He saw Mr. Wade's face pressed to the grating of his cell door.

"Will!" cried the Californian with joy. "Thank heaven, you are here! I thought I was doomed to be roasted in this place."

"Not if I can get you out!" cried the boy fireman. "But where are the rest of the prisoners?"

"All out," declared Wade. "It's a regular jail delivery, Will. There is treachery at work here."

While Will worked at the lock with his fireman's axe, the Californian told his story, and it was a thrilling one.

(To be continued.)

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

JAYWALKERS LOSE RIGHTS IN PARIS

Jaywalkers have lost their rights in Paris. The public prosecutor, in a recent case, argued that pedestrians are part of the traffic. The case went up through the lower Courts with the decision changing back and forth, but the highest Court has ruled against the pedestrian and imposed a fine of one franc (about four cents).

THREE-WHEELED CARS ARE TRIED IN RACE

Automobiles built bicycle-fashion, with only three wheels, have been used in Germany for taxi-cab and private service and have recently appeared in racing circles. A car of this type recently won a six-day motor trial event in Scotland.

SOME REASONS WHY TIRES WEAR OUT

Tires on the right wheels of a car wear faster than those on the left wheels because the car is driven at the right side of the road, where the right side tires come into contact with ruts, debris and the curbing of the road. Another reason is that because of the camber, or the slope of the road toward the gutter, the right tires bear most of the car's weight. Constant grinding and sliding in the loose debris cause more wear on the tires which pass through it. The left-hand tires are almost always near the center, the part of the road most traveled.

KEEP A CASUAL WATCH FOR LEAKS

At this season of the year it is well to stop small leaks in the cooling system the moment they appear. A slow leak in the radiator, which may have been developed since it was last filled, may cause serious inconvenience and great harm during freezing weather. Keep a casual watch for all leaks, not only in the radiator, but in the hose connections and the water pump packing glands. Every time the hood is lifted, note whether the hose connections and the glands are tight. As a rule, hose connection leaks can be stopped by tightening the hose clamps, and gland leaks may be remedied by turning up the gland nuts, unless the packing is worn out and must be replaced.

RADIO WILL RUSH NEWS OF MOON ECLIPSE FROM CANADA

Radio will be employed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to send observations of the eclipse of the moon to be taken for Harvard University in the early morning of June 15 at Baker Lake, in the Northwest Territory. This lake in the far North lies 150 miles west of the post of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Chesterfield Inlet, Hudson's Bay. Director R. Meldrum Stewart of the Dominion Observatory at Ottawa has received a communication from Harvard astronomers asking if it would be possible to obtain these observations.

It would be an arduous journey for the "mounties," but officials are inclined to think they would make it in the interest of science if word could be sent to the post at Chesterfield Inlet. The only means would be by radio, and it is expected the university will obtain the co-operation of one of the large broadcasting stations to send the message, which would be received both at the Inlet and at Fort Norman.

LAUGHS

HOW ABOUT HOSE?

She was just a gardener's daughter, but she knew all the rakes.

—Denison Flamingo.

Jim: Why don't you go home?

Will: My wife's mad at me and locked me out.

Jim: What's she mad about?

Will: Because I don't come home.

—Goblin.

SHOCKING

What if she was only an electrician's daughter—she sure was a live wire!

Cincinnati Cynic

WHY, HENRY W.!

"How do you know *Evangeline* was the first wicked poem in America?"

"Why, doesn't Longfellow say, 'This is the forest prime evil?'"

—Illinois Siren.

NEVER MIND ME

Freddy returned to his Iowa home from college during a wet spell. As he paraded the village sidewalks he noticed a hat lying in the mud of the street. He picked it up, found a man's head beneath it and endeavored to help him out.

The mired one spoke: "Never mind me. I'm on horseback."

—Ames Green Gander.

HELP!

Bricker (trying to redeem himself): Well, at least she could dance, couldn't she?

Bricked: Dance? Say—it was like helping an old lady across Fifth avenue in the middle of the block.

—Annapolis Log.

IN A CAFE

Clarice: Look at that striking young waiter.

Babette: *Tres chic, n'est-ce pas?*

Clarice: Tray sheik is right.

—Stanford Chaparrel.

Tom And His Camera

Tom Gale was the happiest boy in Brooklyn on the morning of June 5th, when his father handed him a pretty little amateur photograph camera as a birthday present, for the boy was sixteen years old that day.

It was just what Tom had been wishing for during the past several months, for the boys in his street all had either bicycles, ponies, tennis outfits, footballs, and other things with which to amuse themselves when they came home from school, and he had nothing of the kind.

There was a little pamphlet to the camera box which explained how to take portraits and landscape views, which Tom studied very carefully and after a few days' practice, he mastered the art of making pictures, and turned out some very fair work.

Now throughout all his experiences, it never once occurred to Tom that it was necessary to have a permit to use his camera in Prospect Park until an incident occurred that brought it to his mind.

He just planted his tripod one sunny afternoon, in the vicinity of the Parade ground, to take a snap-shot at a corner of the lake, in which some swans were swimming along, when out of the bushes came a policeman.

"See here, young feller," said he, approaching the startled boy, "have you got a license to take pictures in this park?"

"No," replied Tom, with a start and a changing of color, as his fingers involuntarily closed over the tripod of his camera.

"I thought not," said the officer, in satisfied tones. "I'll have to arrest——"

But before he had fairly begun speaking Tom snatched up his camera and away he ran like a streak, with horrible visions of prison straining him in the face to lend speed to his legs.

The policeman was very fat, and of course could not run so swiftly as Tom, thereby giving the boy a great advantage.

He soon left the panting and puffing officer far in the rear, and dodging in toward the lake as he saw another policeman ahead, he glided toward an open rustle summerhouse on the water's edge.

It looked like a good place to hide until the two policemen went away, but as he drew near it he saw two men inside who were standing with their backs turned toward him, earnestly talking.

Both were dressed plainly, and one was older than the other.

The youngest had a smooth face and was about thirty years old, while the other was evidently ten years older, and although he wore no mustache or beard, he had side whiskers as dark as his hair.

The hidden boy would not have paid much attention to the two men had it not been for the singular fact that one was blind in the right eye, the loss of his optic being remedied by wearing a staring glass eye.

As the boy noticed this deformity he also saw that the two men were very angry at each other, and as their voices arose to a pitch of fury he heard the elder man exclaim:

"Jasper Stafford, although you are my step-brother, you must pay your gambling debt to me

as if I were a stranger. I hold your note for five hundred dollars which you lost to me in Murphy's poker room, and as I am hard pressed for funds I want you to pay up. Refuse, and I swear that I will take the note to your father, expose your depravity, and swear to sue you for the amount."

"Roger Priestly," cried the young man, hoarsely, as he sprang up with pale cheeks and flashing eyes, "would you be guilty of such accursed meanness as that? Would you disgrace me forever, knowing as you know how my father detests all vices and believes I am an exemplary young man, studying, as I am, for the ministry?"

"I am desperate," replied Priestly, in unmoved tones. "I must have money. I shall not hesitate over the means I take to get it."

"But I tell you again I have not got it, and I implore you to wait until I can borrow it from father," said Stafford. "He is a rich man, but I have recently borrowed so much he may question me, and I cannot lie. Have mercy, I beseech you, Roger, and do not forget that I never did a wrong act in my life until you brought me to that gambling house and induced me to play for money, when the fatal fascination for cards overwhelmed me."

It was only a chapter of an incident that was to affect Tom Gale's life, and when the two men vanished, he left his overcoat, and went over the fence of the park, making his escape without the policeman seeing him, and then hurried home.

One of his neighbors owned a cat-boat which was kept in Jamaica Bay, and when Saturday afternoon came. Tom went down to the shore, to take a sail with his friend.

There were some pretty views to be secured there, the boy assured him, so Tom carried his camera along, with his lunch and fishing tackle, assured of having a fine day's sport.

Unfortunately, though, the prospect of taking pictures became a matter of doubt, as the sky was threatening all the afternoon.

While Tom's friend went out on the cat-boat in a skiff to shake out the furl of the sail and get up the anchor, Tom strolled off with his camera to get a water view, before the sky became any darker, and thus would spoil all possibility of any picture after all.

He saw a float moored amid the reeds, at an isolated spot opposite the old steamboat channel that ran from Canarsie, and planted his tripod in the reeds, in back of it.

From there he had a magnificent view of the bay, down so far as Rockaway bar, and the foreground of the picture taking in the old abandoned float, would break the monotony of the water scene, and lend attractiveness to the picture.

Having gained a good focus, he swung open the ground glass, slipped his plate-holder in the notches, and drew out the slide.

He then grasped the cap, pulled it off the lens, and counted.

The gloomy weather necessitated a longer exposure than usual, and when he had timed it correctly by his watch he capped the lens again, shoved in the slide over the plate, and was just in the act of taking out the holder, when he heard a loud noise.

Glancing up hastily, he saw the crouching figure of a man go rushing through the tall reeds and

disappear behind an old boat-house a short distance away.

Tom was mystified over the man's strange actions.

Then he swept a keen glance around and observed something which he had not noticed before. It was the drenched body of a man lying upon the float.

With his curiosity aroused over the matter Tom made his way toward the float, when upon coming to the trail made by the man who ran away through the tall grass, he saw a gold watch and chain lying in the mud and picked them up.

Considering himself lucky over the find, he continued on to the float, and reaching the prostrate man he bent over him, peered in his face, and then started up with a terrified cry.

"The man is dead!" was Tom's frantic ejaculation.

The body was drenched—as if it had just come out of the water, and the boy made the startling discovery that the man was the youngest of the two—Jasper Stafford—whom he had heard quarreling with Roger Priestly in the Prospect Park rustic house!

It occupied several moments for Tom to recover from the shock, and he was just about to hurry away from the spot, when he heard a footstep behind him, and turning around, he beheld a man.

He looked like a plain citizen, but it happened that he was a detective, and he said, apologetically:

"Was just passing, saw this fellow, and came to see what the trouble was? Fall overboard? Friend of yours? What are you doing with that handsome watch in your hand?"

Before Tom could reply the man peered at the recumbent form quite sharply, and then burst out with:

"Jerusalem! The man is dead! There are ugly finger marks on his throat, as if he'd been strangled. Then, he's been immersed, too. Lord, and see, his watch-chain has been ripped out of his vest button hole! See here, sonny, is that your watch?"

"No!" trembling replied Tom, turning pale in the face.

"How did this happen?"

"I'm sure I can't tell you, sir."

"Humph! Very likely. This is a murder. You are my prisoner."

Poor Tom was marched off to the prison cell.

That afternoon the detective, who caused his arrest, called upon him, and closely questioned him, when Tom explained how it happened that he came to be near the float, how he saw the man stealing away, how he found the watch, and how he then not only discovered the dead man, but saw that he was a person whom he had met before, under peculiar circumstances.

A few more questions passed, and then he went away without saying a word, and hunted up Roger Priestly.

He found that gentleman at home, in a fashionable house on a stylish street, and being ushered into the parlor, he asked him:

"Where were you on Saturday afternoon?"

"In New York," promptly replied Priestly.

"Can you prove it?"

Priestly looked startled, and questioned the detective, whereupon the man told him that Stafford was murdered, and that suspicion rested upon him (Priestly).

With many expressions of grief, horror and amazement the man brought the detective to New York, and proved by a friend that he had been in his company all day Saturday.

On the following night he shadowed Priestly to a noted gambling den in New York and saw him enter the proprietor's private office.

It opened on the hall, and the detective listened outside the door.

"I have come to pay you the five hundred I owe you," he heard Priestly say. "Here is a note signed by my brother covering the amount."

"But now he is dead, who will pay it?"

"My step-father—it is drawn against him. Just state that it was a gambling debt, and to hush up the disgrace on his dead son's name he won't hesitate long about paying up."

The detective began to imagine that Tom Gale was an innocent boy, and that Priestly knew more about Stafford's death than he would confess.

With this, impression on his mind, and a new idea with it, he returned to Tom's prison with the boy's camera, and said:

"See here, wasn't you photographing the spot where the crime was committed a moment before you saw Stafford lying on the float?"

"Yes, I took a picture," asserted Tom, anxiously.

"And the negative is yet in the plate holder?"

"Certainly, sir, unless some one took it out."

"No one touched it. Now can you develop the plate?"

"Very easily."

"Do so."

Tom enumerated all the things he needed, and within half an hour the detective came back with them, and was locked in the cell with the boy.

It was darkened, a ruby light was lit, and then Tom took the plate out of the holder and keenly watched by the lynx-eyed detective, in the deep gloom of the cell, he developed the plate.

The scene on the plate showed a lowering sky over the placid waters of the bay, while kneeling on the float was Roger Priestly, dripping wet, pulling the body of Jasper Stafford out of the water!

The detective took the things out of Tom's cell, and with the precious plate in his hands he hurried away.

That night he met Priestly in his house again, and snapping a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, the detective exclaimed:

"I arrest you for the murder of your step-brother, Priestly!"

"Eh? What!" gasped the startled man, turning deathly pale.

"Look at this evidence of your guilt!" said the officer.

He held the negative up to the light.

But one glance Priestly cast upon it, and with a moan he fainted.

When he recovered consciousness he was in prison. Then he weakened and confessed all to the detective.

Thus it was that Priestly paid the penalty for his crime and Tom was released.

CURRENT NEWS

HORSES TO CARRY KITCHENS

Kitchenettes that can be carried on horseback have been adopted by the War Department for serving hot food to calvarymen afield. Weighing only 200 pounds, they can be folded and packed in thirty seconds. One kitchenette serves a full war-strength troop.

FALLS 200 FEET ON SOFT SNOW

Tossed from a swinging aerial tramway bucket, Glen Higley, thirty-eight, a miner, fell 200 feet to a snowbank and will live, hospital attaches in Bingham, Utah, say. Higley was going from a mine to the reducing plant of the Utah-Delaware mine when the bucket began swaying and pitched him out head foremost.

COMIC STRIP CAUSES PROTESTS IN CHINA

Action of a leading Peking English language newspaper in introducing an American "comic strip" has caused a flood of letters pro and con.

Most of the "tnti" letters voice the view that Peking has been one of the few real intellectual centers left in the world. One despairing reader remarks dolefully, "I had thought I was living in a civilized community."

IN FRANCE EVERYTHING HONKS BUT AUTO

The honk of an automobile horn in Marseilles, France, warns against anything but an automobile.

Virtually all the motor cars have the modern type of mechanical noise producers, while the old-fashioned hand-worked horns now are used on bicycles, horse-drawn carriages, street cars and motor boats.

ELECTRIC SHOCK FOR AUTO THIEF URGED

In the matter of locks and other safety devices numerous "bright ideas" have been brought out. Some have suggested that it would be advisable to remove the steering wheel before an owner leaves his car for any length of time. Electrification of the driver's seat to shock the thief away from his evil intention is another. Still another suggestion from one of a mechanical turn of mind was to place a bell in the car in such a manner that it would sound an alarm when a visitor other than the owner's friend sat in the driver's seat.

MANY BRITISH FIRMS ACQUIRE QUEER NAMES

More unusual and curious names for companies were registered in England during the past year previously, according to registration statistics made public here recently.

The most curious name registered in 1926 was "Dog Baths and Requisites, Ltd." This company was formed to conduct hairdressing saloons, baths and toilet rooms for dogs of the ultra-rich. Other names included, "Uncles, Ltd.," "King Soal, Ltd.," "Virtuous Lady Mining Co.," "Mrs. Brown's Little Tea Shop Lunches Too, Ltd.," and "Little Mary, Ltd."

BABY SAILS SEAS FOR A NEW HOME

Some day when Margaret Ann is big enough for questions, and asks her mother: "Where did you get me?" the mother, who as yet has not seen Margaret Ann, will tell her:

"You came on a shining white ship, sailing, sailing across the shining blue water."

And that will be the truth, for Baby Margaret Ann, seven weeks old, caring not about such things, as parentage, real, accidental, or by choice —was delivered to the nurse aboard the trans-Pacific liner President Madison, and "consigned" to Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Cameron, Shanghai, for adoption.

PEDESTRIANS WARNED OF CROSSING DANGER

Pedestrians shouldn't walk behind cars that have stopped at street intersections to await the change in signals. Many motorists halt their cars directly in the path of people wanting to cross the street. Some folk then start to pass behind them. In the meantime, motor vehicle operators, seeing their machines are blocking the path, start to back up a few feet, endangering persons who are walking behind the cars. This occurs every hour in the day, believes the National Safety Council, which sounds the warning and urges auto drivers to try to stop ere reaching the intersection.

MOTOR COACHES TO REPLACE TROLLEYS ALONG SOUND IF COMMISSION APPROVES

Abandonment of trolleys and installation of motor coaches throughout Southern Connecticut and the Upper Sound part of Westchester County, N. Y., is sought in petitions which the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad and the Connecticut company are preparing to file with the Public Utility Commission in Hartford.

Everett S. Miller, President of the New York and Stamford Railway, who disclosed that the petitions were to be filed, described the action as "the direct result of negotiations initiated nearly a year ago by the Traffic Committee of the Greenwich Chamber of Commerce through Harry L. Nado, Secretary of the chamber.

"The New York and Stamford uses an interstate trolley system, which in part of its territory leases and operates lines owned by the petitioning companies." It is understood that if the petitions are granted these companies will cancel their present leases with the New York and Stamford and release their right of way to it for motor coach routes.

Among the cities and towns where busses will be used if authorized by the Connecticut commission are Port Chester, N. Y., Greenwich and Stamford.

Abandonment of the old service and substitution of the new can be accomplished in a few weeks without any interruption of schedule, Mr. Miller said.

Sunday the trolley lines in Port Chester will be abandoned and a fleet of busses installed.

TIMELY TOPICS

FINGERPRINTS ON AUTO PERMITS

One of the most important features of the new State motor vehicle act of Pennsylvania provides that "every applicant for such license shall furnish with his application a set of his fingerprints and two photographs."

NEW VEGETABLE TRIED OUT

Dasheen, a new vegetable, is being planted in the West this year. The plant is little known here but for many years has been successfully grown in parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. They are tubers and are prepared for food like potatoes. A dasheen weighs from one to five pounds and an average of ten pounds may be harvested from a single hill.

ACCIDENTS CROWD LONDON HOSPITALS

The increasing number of motor accidents, not only in London, but in the country districts, is putting a serious strain on hospitals, where the cost of such accidents is anything from \$22,500 per year upward. At some hospitals, it is said, operations on hundreds of other patients are delayed by the motor accident victims.

Committees are being appointed to consider the better way to meet these additional costs. One suggestion which finds favor is that the motorist and the insurance company behind him be made to contribute systematically to hospital funds.

SECOND SPEED FOR BRAKING

Just as second speed makes the best combination for a quick getaway so does it make one of the best ways of stopping quickly in traffic. When the spurt of speed is simply a matter of skinning past a few snailing cars, and stopping again behind a street car some two hundred feet ahead, remaining in second will be found handy for the entire job of speeding up and slowing down. Ninetenths of the job can be done with the throttle, which is a bit closer to the ideal in speed control.

REAL SUICIDE CLUB FOUND IN BUDAPEST

Police in Budapest are searching for the writer of an anonymous letter describing a suicide club, supposedly of wide ramifications.

The letter was obviously written by a woman of education, who stated she had become a member of the club by accident. Meetings of the club are held twice a week in various centres. Lectures and discourses extolling the virtues of suicide are presented, she said.

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of suicides here recently, the police declare.

AUTO EXPORTS RANK FIRST

Automotive exports now rank first in the value of all manufactured products exported, and third in value of all exports.

In the four years 1922-26, there were made in the United States and Canada 16,500,000 automobiles, of which 1,250,000, or about 7 per cent,

were exported. In these same four years General Motors sold about 3,350,000 cars and sold oversea 326,000 cars, or more than 9 per cent of the total number. The value of the overseas business of General Motors is at present 30 per cent of the total value of all makes of American and Canadian motor cars sold abroad, and exceeds any other American motor car manufacturer.

RAILROAD USES TRUCK TO MAKE DELIVERIES

The Boston & Maine Railroad, acting through its motor truck subsidiary, the Boston & Maine Transportation Company, has inaugurated a store-door delivery service utilizing steel freight containers which are interchangeable between truck and train.

The containers, which have a capacity of five tons, may be loaded inside a shipper's factory in Boston, locked securely, transferred by truck at any time before 6:30 p. m. to special cars on the railroad and carried by train to Worcester and Springfield in time for delivery before the next business day begins.

Handling of short haul less-than-carload shipments is greatly reduced, as is also damage to freight and losses due to theft.

5,000-YEAR-OLD TOMB FOUND IN EGYPT BELIEVED THE MOST ANCIENT ON RECORD

Discovery of a tomb estimated to be 5,000 years old, dating to the third dynasty of the Pharaohs, was recently announced. The discoverers say it may be the earliest tomb ever found in Egypt.

The find was made by Cecil Firth, who has been conducting excavations in behalf of the Antiquities Department of the Egyptian Government, at Sakkara, a village near the ruins of Memphis. Near Sakkara is the famous step pyramid, believed to be the oldest of the Egyptian pyramids.

The tomb is said to contain many unique features. It is located in the boundary wall surrounding the step pyramid and was discovered only after a long and difficult search, owing to extensive precautions taken by the builder to conceal it.

It is thought, but not yet established, that it is the tomb of Imhotep, architect to King Zoser, who built the step pyramid. Imhotep was greatly revered by the ancients, being considered one of the wisest of men and founder of the science of medicine, the law and other branches of learning. Other theories about the identity of the tomb are that it may have been used temporarily for Zoser himself during the building of the step pyramid, or that it may be the tomb of Zoser's Queen.

A deep stairway of a hundred steps leads down to the tomb through an obscure tunnel in the rock. Branch tunnels and stairways lead to a series of underground rooms, the walls of which once were blue tiled, like the rooms in the step pyramid.

The rooms still bear the remains of interesting limestone reliefs and decorations of its period, including the portrait of King Zoser. In one tunnel twelve magnificent alabaster wine jars were discovered.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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